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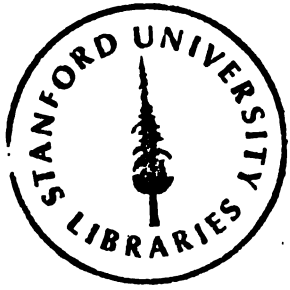
# THE WEST INDIES AND THE EMPIRE

H. DE R. WALKER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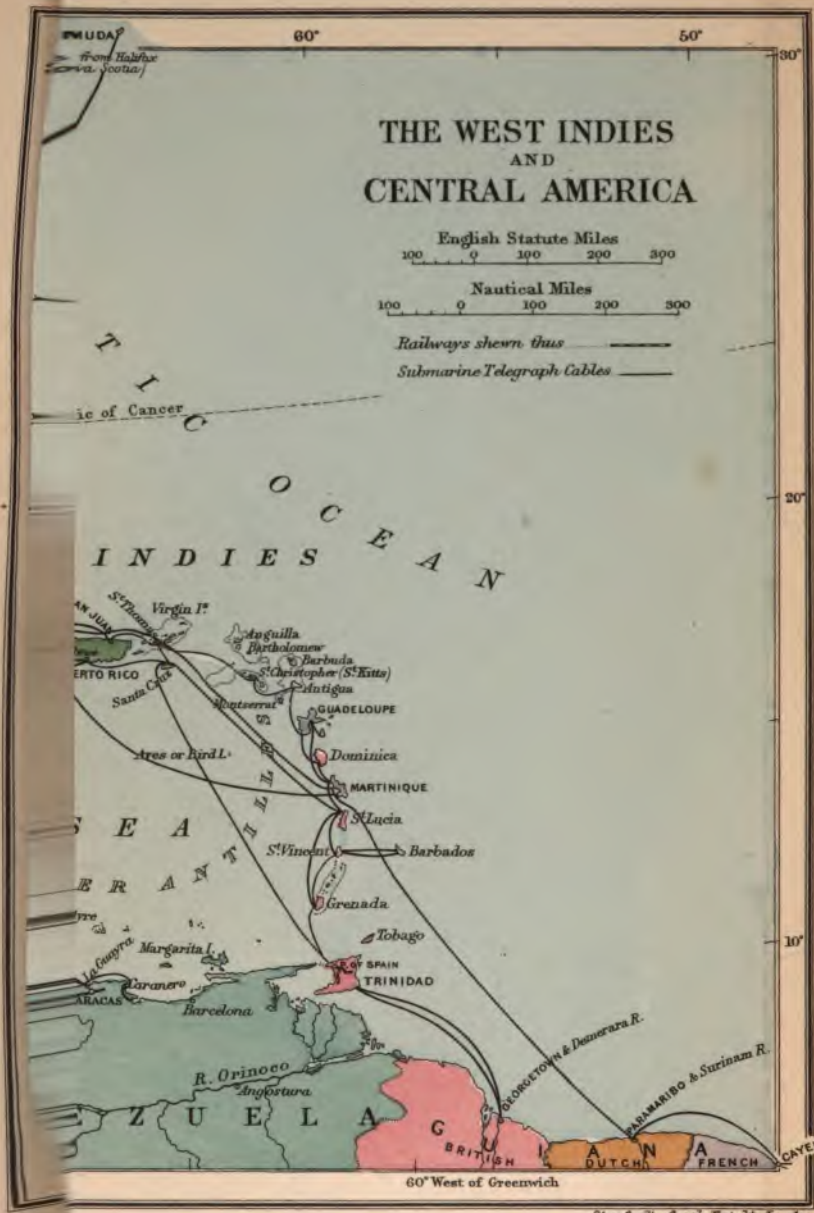
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# THE WEST INDIES

AND

# THE EMPIRE

STUDY AND TRAVEL IN
THE WINTER OF
1900—1901

BY

H. DE R. WALKER

AUTHOR OF "AUSTRALASIAN DEMOCRACY"

*WITH COLOURED MAP*

*LONDON*

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1901

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# PREFACE

BEFORE my departure for the West Indies last autumn I received an invitation on behalf of the Royal Colonial Institute to collect notes with a view to reading a paper before the Fellows of that Society. My experience was the common one of finding myself provided with too much material. The contents of the paper, which was delivered on the 11th of June, have been embodied in an amplified form in the following pages; but many new subjects have been introduced, and more than three-fourths of the whole is now published for the first time.

When I came to review my ideas, I realised the fundamental difference between tropical and temperate Colonies. In Australia and New Zealand most of the subjects which I studied were such as directly affected the people of those countries alone. The extensions of the functions of the State; the growth of Labour Parties; the effects of woman suffrage: all these matters, and

many others, were interesting in view of possible similar developments at home, but did not otherwise concern us. Even in regard to Australian Federation, it was clear that a complete scheme, elaborated by the Australians themselves, would be submitted for the Imperial sanction. In all domestic questions, in short, the Australians are not only willing and able to govern themselves, but, fortunately for us, would resent any interference on our part. To put the thing in another way: as a Parliamentary elector, I have no responsibility for the progress of Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Can the same be said of the West Indies? Of India we know that it cannot, but we are too much inclined to place all the Colonies in one category, in spite of the obvious differences between them, because we employ for all of them the same generic term. At least, we have done so until recently, when a progressive unwillingness is being manifested to use the word Colony in reference to the Dominion of Canada or the Australian Commonwealth.

As regards the responsibility which I contend that every one of us shares for the welfare of the West Indies, I am not thinking primarily of the effect of our fiscal policy upon all the inhabitants, whites, negroes, and East Indians alike, who are engaged in the cultivation and manufacture of

sugar. Of course, I have much to say about that question, and I have sought to prove its urgency, with special reference to the danger of depending upon the market for West Indian sugar afforded at present in the United States, and to the necessity for the construction of Central Factories in some of the smaller islands. But, in its wider aspects, the problem which the Continental sugar bounties compel us to face, touches also other parts of Greater Britain; and Australia may make its voice heard in the time which is fast approaching when it has a surplus stock of sugar for exportation.

It is not this matter, however, which has prompted me in the selection of the title of this book: I have in view rather the condition of things which has impelled the Imperial Government to send successive Royal Commissions to inquire into West Indian affairs. Financial troubles have doubtless been the immediate cause; but I question whether so much attention would have been paid to them but for the feeling that, as the descendants of persons carried to the West Indies against their will, under a system legalised by the British Government, the negroes may not be abandoned by us in their adversity. Scarcely less strong is the claim upon us of the 200,000 or more East Indians, British subjects before their transplantation, whom we have encouraged to

migrate, and for whose just treatment during indenture Imperial officers are held to account. Neither to the East Indians nor to the negroes may we say, as we should to people of our own race: "Govern yourselves; if you make mistakes, it will be your own fault." It is from this point of view, and not upon any preconceived notions of an inherent right to self-government of British subjects of whatever race or creed, that I ask for the consideration of my arguments. I contend that we are responsible, and that we cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility.

If this principle be accepted, a special interest attaches to the beneficent activity of the Imperial Department of Agriculture; to the grants in aid of revenue; to the subsidies paid conjointly with the Governments of Canada and Jamaica; to the despairing appeal of Antigua for an Imperial guarantee upon a loan for the construction of a Central Factory. We are bound to ask ourselves whether the assistance has taken the best form, and whether we have done all that is required. To these questions I have attempted to supply an answer.

In accordance with popular usage, I have taken the term West Indies to include British Guiana; but I exclude British Honduras and the Bahamas from my survey, as I was unable to visit either of these Colonies.

Though I have divided my subject into no more than five chapters, I have found it impossible to keep the matter of each entirely distinct from that of the others. In order, therefore, to avoid a large number of cross-references and to minimise any faults of arrangement, I have invoked the services of a dexterous index-maker.

Where a large number of Colonies are dealt with, the writer must either resort to constant qualifications or be content to convey impressions which are accurate in their broad outlines. Except upon some of the larger questions, the latter course has seemed to me preferable.

The lamented death of President McKinley is unlikely to lead to any change in the policy of the American administration, but it is permissible to hold a more hopeful view than that which is expressed in the text, concerning the prospects of the Reciprocity Treaties. The tragic circumstances attending their emphatic advocacy by the late President may influence the American people in their favour and indirectly modify the attitude of the Senate.

H. DE R. WALKER.

95, *Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.*
*September* 30, 1901.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE SUGAR INDUSTRY AND SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

EVERY Englishman who visits the West Indies is bound to have started with preconceived notions in regard to the Continental sugar bounties and other matters affecting our fellow-citizens in that part of the world. Personally, I have never been able to see that the imposition of a duty countervailing a bounty upon exportation is any infringement of the principles of Free Trade. But the question has been discussed so fully in its general aspect, that, after stating the position in the fewest words, I shall pass on to the thoughts which struck me most forcibly when I was in the West Indies.

The history of the sugar industry begins with a long period of high prices and great prosperity; but, before the emancipation of the slaves, and

even before the abolition of the slave-trade, complaints are rife that a progressive diminution in the price of sugar is gradually undermining the position of the planters. Next, the Emancipation Act is followed in most of the Colonies by a scarcity of labour, as the ex-slaves, if they work at all, prefer to cultivate their own holdings. Then the Imperial Authorities abandon the differential duty against slave-grown sugar, and thus increase the competition encountered by the planter in England. Finally, when several European countries give bounties upon the output and exportation of sugar grown from the beet, he finds himself confronted in the English market, on which he would naturally depend, with a form of competition by which he is unfairly handicapped. If he is making some headway, foreign nations can, as in 1896, increase the bounties and nullify all his efforts.

What, then, is the amount of these bounties? I think we must ignore the bounties on production as being outside the scope of any possible retaliation on our part in the interests of the West Indies. The bounties upon the exportation of beet sugar vary at present in amount from about £4 10s. a ton in France to £1 5s. and £1 15s. on raw and refined sugar, respec-

tively, in Germany. In order that the sugar industry in the West Indies should be put upon an equitable basis, it would be necessary that we should impose upon Continental sugar a duty exactly equal in amount to the bounty paid upon its exportation, which duty would of course be limited in its duration to the time that the bounty continued to be paid. Otherwise, a measure of mere justice to our Colonies would be transformed into a differential duty in their favour. It is not my purpose here to inquire to what extent the price of sugar in England might thereby be raised; some think not at all, except at the very first, others possibly by a halfpenny a pound. The important point is that it would be much easier now to levy countervailing duties than at a time when sugar entered the country free of any duty.

The answer to the current objection that, unless the price of sugar were raised appreciably in England, no benefit would accrue to the West Indian, is that his business would be placed upon a stable footing, his calculations would be made upon an assured basis, and he would have no difficulty in securing additional capital for the extension and improvement of his undertaking. There seems to be no doubt that sugar can

be produced from cane as cheaply as from beet.

The condition of the industry in the West Indies is, I am thankful to say—at least in Trinidad and British Guiana—not quite so bad as it was in 1897, at the time of the investigations of the last Royal Commission. Two factors, which were already in operation, but had not had their full effect, have tended to mitigate the force of the crisis. They are the great reduction in the output of Cuban sugar due to the troubles which culminated in the Spanish-American War, and the imposition by the United States of countervailing duties upon bounty-fed sugars. We have no guarantee of the permanence of the American countervailing duties, and a motion for their repeal has already been introduced into Congress. But, even granting that they are maintained, how long will they be of any use to the British West Indies in view of the *ad valorem* duty of about 60 per cent. upon second-class sugars, which will become prohibitive as soon as the Americans themselves can supply the entire national demand? The duty upon the best refined sugar has already, for the sake of American refiners, been fixed at a prohibitive rate, with the result that those of our factories which are equipped with the most modern

machinery find it difficult not to make an article which is too good to be marketable.

In 1900 the United States consumed 2,200,000 tons of sugar. Towards this amount 350,000 tons are produced in the United States, and 300,000 enter free of duty from Hawaii. If this were all, the West Indies would not have much immediate cause for anxiety. But Puerto Rico makes 85,000 tons a year which will in future pay no duty ; and Cuba and the Philippines suggest disquieting considerations. The recent judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States concerns Puerto Rico alone, and is to the effect that Congress has the constitutional right to tax imports from that country. A similar decision is anticipated in the case of the Philippines, whose annual production has been as much as 130,000 tons; but it is scarcely likely that the United States, having expended $20,000,000 in the purchase of the group and many more in its conquest, will treat it fiscally as a foreign country. Cuba, of course, will be the pivot of the situation for the next few years. The Cubans have accepted American suzerainty, though with apparent unwillingness, but nothing has yet been decided as regards the future commercial relations. There is likely to be a big fight between conflicting

interests in the American Senate, but it is at least probable that the excess of Cuban sugar over local requirements, which amounted to a million tons in 1894, the last year before the recommencement of civil strife, will enter the United States upon more favourable terms than the sugar imported from the British West Indies. If, then, we add these various items together, and consider the impetus likely to be given to the cane industry, especially in the Philippines, by the application of American brains and American enterprise, we may dread the approaching disappearance of the margin for foreign sugar.

I do not look forward with much confidence to the ratification by the American Senate of the Reciprocity Treaties entered into with several of the West Indian Colonies. It is true that the President has recently avowed his strong predilection for Reciprocity Treaties in general, but he may, as on other occasions, fail to find the Senate amenable to his wishes. It is scarcely necessary to point out that American treaties do not under the constitution become operative until they have been approved by a majority of at least two to one in the Senate. When I come to deal in a later chapter with the system of government in the British West Indies, I shall be able to show

that, apart from other advantages, the more the Colonies can be combined under one administration, the greater will be their ability to make satisfactory commercial arrangements with other countries.

If my prognostications are tinged with pessimism, I still think that it is deplorable for an Englishman to see British Colonies saved from ruin by the agency of a foreign country. In any case, geographical propinquity and lower freights may lead the West Indies (and especially Jamaica) to trade more and more with the United States. I do not want to see this tendency accentuated by our culpable apathy. For culpable apathy it is that we should allow some of our oldest Colonies to sink lower and lower because we hesitate to impose countervailing duties upon European bounty-fed sugar, the one effective and economically sound remedy. I do not want to overelaborate this point; but I have come back from my visit with very strong feelings, and it seems to me marvellous that the Colonists continue to cleave to the British Empire, as they do (whatever may be said to the contrary), when we have bartered their rights as British citizens for a problematical monetary advantage to ourselves. A different opinion was expressed by the Chairman

of the Colonial Bank, at the last annual meeting of the shareholders, when he said that:

"In spite of the inherent loyalty of the West Indians, he found that a strong feeling was growing up among the most thoughtful members of the community that they would be far better under American than under British rule; and he was of opinion that, when it was seen how greatly prosperity was being brought about in Cuba and Puerto Rico under American rule, the feeling would grow stronger."

I do not know whether Mr. Dobree has recently visited the West Indies, but his impression is diametrically opposed to mine. Though I stayed in no less than seven of the Colonies, met all sorts and conditions of people and studied the local press, I saw no trace of any desire to sever the British connection. Such remarks as Mr. Dobree's are eagerly seized upon by the newspapers which are ever ready to belittle Englishmen whether at home or abroad. They gloat over the idea that there is disloyalty in spite of the heavy disbursements from the Imperial Exchequer. They forget, however, that the grants in aid have been rendered necessary by too strict an adherence to the doctrines of their high-priest, the late Lord Farrer, who is prodigal

of his sympathy with the West Indies, but concludes against "any remedy which would injuriously affect the much larger interests of consumers in the United Kingdom."[1] Is the British Empire, then, to be run solely on the basis of £ s. d.? I have been asked more than once what is the total population of the West Indies, and, upon my replying that it does not exceed two millions, the next question has been how I can propose to subordinate to the interests of two millions those of forty millions at home? This is an absolutely crooked view of the problem. Unless we wish to throw off the responsibilities of Empire, we must place justice before alleged material expediency.

But there is another Imperial aspect of the matter. It is the fear of American retaliation which has caused Trinidad to repel the advances of Canada towards a closer commercial union. Under the circumstances I think that Trinidad is absolutely right. It is true that if similar concessions were not offered to, and accepted by, the other West Indian Colonies, Trinidad would be in an exceptionally favourable position, as its exports of sugar amount to little more than a third of the total consumption of

[1] "Free Trade *versus* Fair Trade," p. 262.

Canada. But such a policy on the part of Canada would be anti-Imperial, and would tend to excite much bitterness of feeling. It is, therefore, the soundest common-sense that all the British West Indies should stand together, and that they should hesitate to risk the loss of an enormous market when the market which would be substituted is demonstrably incapable of taking the whole of their output.

The attitude towards Canada thus imposed upon the West Indies is the more to be regretted on account of the concessions which the Dominion Parliament, actuated by a truly patriotic spirit, has made to them in its tariff. In reality, however, apart from their unwillingness to offend their mighty neighbour, the West Indies receive a smaller pecuniary benefit, as against their Continental bounty-fed competitors, from the Canadian concessions than from the American countervailing duties. I refer, of course, solely to the sugar industry.

So much for the Imperial side of the question, which, in my opinion, would lose none of its importance even if we could look forward in the near future to a large increase in the productivity of the cane. The *Times*, indeed, which has always shown a sincere and sympathetic

interest in the West Indies, hopes that a successful flank movement against the bounties may obviate the necessity of a frontal attack. But I fear that this anticipation, which is admittedly based upon returns issued by officials of the Imperial Department of Agriculture, takes insufficient note of certain points which I will mention soon after I have quoted the guarded statement made by the Imperial Commissioner, Dr. Morris, in his last annual address:

"I believe there is a *reasonable* hope of our being able to increase the sugar contents of the cane and *eventually* of placing within reach of the planter, canes that will not only yield 40 to 50 per cent. more sugar than at present, but will also, if placed under suitable conditions, withstand to a considerable extent the attacks of disease."

I wish to touch upon a somewhat delicate matter. There is not the cordiality of relationship between the Department and the planters which might be expected in view of its principal aim and object. To this extent its utility is impaired; but while I sympathise with Dr. Morris and his subordinates, I cannot altogether blame the planters if I am right in seeing herein the cloven hoof of the bounties. They argue, I take

it, that an increase in the productivity of the cane might be counterbalanced by higher bounties, and that it could have no effect in improving the credit of the industry, the lack of which is its greatest misfortune, while it might be held to weaken the claim to countervailing duties. In any case, the protected cane-sugar growers of Louisiana are equally able to profit by the work of the Department, and they do not hesitate to do so.

The planters are also liable to the danger, in view of the greater publicity attaching to an Imperial Department, that superficial critics will argue that, if so much has been done in the last two or three years, the most favourable expectations are justifiable. But it is the principal recommendation of the seedling cane, B 147, which has been so successful in Barbados, that it has been planted for more than seven years. The investigations, indeed, go back to 1879, when Professor J. B. Harrison accepted the appointment of Professor of Chemistry and Agricultural Science.

In Antigua, when the Bourbon cane had been destroyed by disease in 1895, the planters successfully substituted other varieties upon the advice of their agricultural experts. Incidentally

these facts tend to prove that they are not so unprogressive as they are represented to be, but they must not be taken as implying any doubt in my mind as to the value of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies which was inaugurated in 1898. On the contrary, I am convinced that some such institution is essential to every agricultural community. The Americans have appropriated £800,000 this year for the service of their Agricultural Department. This is Federal expenditure, and is supplemented, though I have no exact information, by many of the individual States. In the same way in Canada, both the Dominion and Provincial Governments seek to foster productive enterprise.

If, then, the more advanced communities are increasingly convinced of the value of their Agricultural Department (the Federal vote in the United States is now £160,000 above that of 1893), how much more necessary is a Department of Agriculture to the West Indies if, as a Demerara sugar-planter, who had carried out extensive experiments upon his estate, contended to me: "We are hardly beyond the threshold of the subject"? He substantiated this assertion by showing me the results obtained from twenty varieties planted in quarter-acre plots which had

been carefully manured and subjected to the same conditions in regard to age and tillage. The famous seedling, B 147, which has given in Barbados results 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. better than White Transparent, with Bourbon out of the running altogether, was in this particular case 29 per cent. less productive than Bourbon and 23 per cent. than Caledonian Queen, which is reckoned as identical with White Transparent; while D 145, a Demerara seedling, was 30 per cent. more productive than Bourbon. And not only are different results obtained from the same cane in different Colonies, as could be proved from official figures for Trinidad and Antigua, but in each Colony innumerable variations in soil, humidity, and exposure to wind must all be taken into account. Lastly, prolonged experience can alone determine the relative immunity from disease of various canes (a point to which Dr. Morris justly attaches the greatest importance) and the extent to which each variety will continue to give good results over a period of years.

We may, therefore, conclude that the problems yet awaiting solution in the sugar industry alone will demand many years of patient investigation, and shall rejoice that, largely owing to the

generous assistance of the Imperial Parliament, the work will be continued in all the Colonies on an efficient scale and by the most competent agricultural experts.

The happy idea that these gentlemen should meet together annually was not, I believe, a part of the original scheme ; but it is of great utility as a medium for the delivery of important papers and for the interchange of opinions. The conference in January of this year, at which I was present, was attended, moreover, not only by the officials of the department, but by leading members of most of the Agricultural Societies, men intimate with the practical side of agriculture, and by representatives of the various educational agencies in the West Indies. The proceedings were most ably conducted under the chairmanship of Dr. Morris, who impressed me profoundly by his boundless enthusiasm, energy, and ability.

In one respect, however, they were disappointing. Dr. Morris was not able to report any progress in the negotiations for the establishment of Central Factories, a matter of transcendent moment to the islands of Barbados, Antigua, and St. Kitts. In these islands (and the remark applies also to the other sugar-producing Colonies

with the exception of British Guiana, Trinidad, and St. Lucia), while the cultivation of the cane has been brought to a high state of perfection, most of the machinery employed in its manufacture is of so primitive and antiquated a character that from 30 to 40 per cent. of the juice capable of being extracted from the cane is estimated to be left in it. I take the following account of the disadvantages of this process of extraction from a letter of the special correspondent of the *Times*, Mr. Thursfield, who visited the West Indies in 1899 :

"The crushing of the cane is very imperfect—as is shown by the fact that the megass has to be dried before it can be used as fuel—the yield of sugar is greatly below the average obtained by more scientific processes of evaporation ; the sugar produced, being largely impregnated with molasses, is sold at prices determined by its inferior quality, and there is great economic waste in the multiplication of independent factories small in scale and, for the most part, totally unequipped with modern appliances."

Equally concise is the description of the benefits derived from modern machinery :

"If, for the primitive methods of crushing by means of wind and water mills, there be sub-

stituted hydraulic crushing machinery actuated by steam, the yield of juice from a given quantity of cane is largely increased, and there is the further economic gain of obtaining the megass in such a condition that it can be immediately burnt in the furnaces without being previously dried in the sun. Next, the amount of sugar to be obtained from a given quantity of juice can again be materially increased by evaporating the juice *in vacuo*, thereby reducing its boiling-point and increasing its yield of crystals, the most approved process being that known as the vacuum pan with triple effect, which I need not describe in detail. Thirdly, the crystals thus obtained may be more completely and effectively separated from the associated molasses by means of the centrifugal machine."

Though the losses sustained seem sufficiently obvious, there are some who maintain that, as there is a definite market for muscovado sugar and few countries are engaged in its preparation, Barbados and the Leeward Islands would make a mistake if they sought to replace it by more highly refined sugars. This is a very technical matter upon which I cannot give any opinion of my own. But I do not see how the planters in these islands can hope to hold their own if, in the

crushing process, they fail to extract as much juice from the cane as their competitors and if they continue their wasteful expenditure upon a number of small factories. On the whole, I prefer to think that the last Royal Commission did not advocate Central Factories without having considered the question in all its bearings.

It is objected, of course, that the planters are unworthy of sympathy because they have not marched with the times: they should have co-operated, before their resources were exhausted, in the construction of well-equipped factories. This is quite true; but such co-operation would not have been easy where the estates were small and some of the owners were resident while others were represented by attorneys; especially as the latter would naturally throw cold water upon any improvement which would reduce their importance. Hence the opportunity was allowed to pass by, and, when the necessity was finally realised, many of the estates had been mortgaged to the hilt and the nominal owners had neither capital nor credit. It is possible, indeed, that the legitimate lamentations of the planters have affected their credit injuriously, and I have heard the same thing said of the justly pessimistic report of the last Royal Commission. However that may be, the

Commissioners recommended that the Imperial Government should lend to Barbados at the rate of interest at which it borrowed, the sum of £120,000, which the Barbadian Government should advance to owners of estates who desired to combine for the establishment of a Central Factory. Two years previously the Barbadian Legislature had unanimously passed an Act empowering the Executive Committee to raise £50,000 and lend the money to the owners of a group of sugar estates for the erection of a Central Factory. The owners were to enter into a contract to deliver to the factory annually a certain acreage of canes and were to give to the Government a lien over the building, machinery and sugar for the payment of the interest and for the provision of a sinking fund to repay the loan. But the Act had been disallowed, whereby further progress had been blocked, as the Secretary of State insisted that the borrowers must also give a first lien upon their plantations, and the owners knew that the mortgagees would not allow them to comply with this condition. Under ordinary circumstances, according to the Royal Commissioners, it would be right to require the amplest security for a loan; but in view of the widespread distress and consequent expenditure

which would follow upon the collapse of the industry, assistance towards its maintenance, even at the risk of financial loss, would probably be the least costly method of discharging the obligations of the Government. And this risk, as Sir Henry Norman, one of the Commissioners, hinted in a supplementary note, would be smaller in the event of countervailing duties. Their imposition, however, would not lessen the necessity for Central Factories because an unprogressive industry cannot hope to survive under open competition; but capitalists might then be more inclined to find the money for their construction.

Under present conditions they have insufficient inducement in the guarantee of 3 per cent. for ten years which the Imperial Authorities have been authorised by Parliament to give upon a sum not exceeding £750,000 subscribed privately for the erection of a Central Factory in each of the islands of Barbados, Antigua, and St. Kitts. It will be noted that the recommendation of the Royal Commission has been widened by the inclusion of Antigua and St. Kitts, but modified by the substitution of a temporary guarantee upon capital for a direct Colonial loan. Upon this basis there have, it is true, been certain negotiations in Barbados and Antigua between the

planters on the one side and Sir Cuthbert Quilter and various gentlemen on the other; but they have all broken down upon a wide disagreement as to the initial cost of a factory capable of making five thousand tons of sugar, and as to the price to be paid for the canes. At the time of writing His Majesty's Government are believed to be considering the advisability of guaranteeing Colonial Government loans for the erection of pioneer factories in the three islands in question. It is to be hoped that the decision will be speedy and favourable, as the matter is extremely urgent.

As regards the contingent liability which His Majesty's Government would assume, it is not as if heavy disbursements were not already being made. Mr. Chamberlain has stated in the House of Commons that, including the sums on this year's estimates, the financial assistance to the West Indies will have amounted to about £320,000 in five years in carrying out the various recommendations of the Royal Commission. In addition, £83,000 have been given in relief of the distress caused by hurricanes.

It would be unprofitable to consider the exact proportion in which these sums have been divided between the various islands. Suffice it to say that the greatest sufferers from the depression

in the sugar industry have been the Leeward Islands, St. Vincent, and Tobago. The last-named, since its identification with the prosperity of Trinidad, may look forward to a happier future; and St. Vincent, additionally harassed by a terrific hurricane in 1898, has been assisted by an Imperial system of land settlement, to which reference will be made hereafter. There remain the Leeward Islands, which, according to a statement kindly prepared for me in the Colonial Secretary's office at Antigua, received in the three years 1898–1900 no less than £160,000 from the Imperial Exchequer. But while it is unreasonable to expect the House of Commons to continue to support these impecunious islands indefinitely, it is demoralising for the inhabitants of the islands (with the exception of Dominica, which, being largely independent of sugar, now makes both ends meet) to be in a state of chronic insolvency. On the other hand, the imposition of countervailing duties, while it would be the quickest as well as the wisest method of lessening the necessity for doles, would have the further recommendation that it would not pauperise those whom it benefited. In the meanwhile, the Legislatures of the Leeward Islands have cut down expenditure

ruthlessly. In a vain attempt to make both ends meet, institutions of public utility have been abandoned or seriously crippled. Taking these islands generally, the educational grants have been reduced by 25 per cent., the subsidy paid to the West India and Panama Telegraph Company for the supply of daily bulletins has been reduced; and a steamer no longer plies between the islands of the group, because their Government was unable to afford the subsidy demanded by the Royal Mail Company. In Antigua the industrial school for girls and a *crèche* for the children of women working in the fields have been abandoned; the number of inmates of the boys' industrial school has been cut down; and the expenditure upon the defence force is less than half of what it was a few years ago. In St. Kitts the hospital at Sandy Point has been closed for want of funds, though the hospital at Basseterre has no more than one hundred beds. For a similar reason the Technical School and the Grammar School have also been closed; but the latter will shortly be reopened in combination with an Agricultural School supported by the Imperial Department of Agriculture. Even before the Technical School at St. Kitts had been closed the authorities at Montserrat had been

compelled, from motives of economy, to discontinue sending to it boys under apprenticeship; and, for the same reason, they have closed their own High School.

From personal knowledge I can say nothing of St. Kitts or Montserrat, but I was very much shocked by a great deal of what I saw in Antigua. It must be understood that the state of things which I shall describe is not due to any present laxity on the part of the Colonial Government, but to sheer want of money. Though the poorhouse, in accordance with the requirements of the island, should be able to shelter some 250 persons permanently incapacitated by old age or physical disability, it actually has accommodation for 70 and has 100 inmates. The doctor in charge told me that he was constantly obliged to send away those who were quite unable to support themselves and had no friends who could help them because more urgent cases had been brought in. The building is in a deplorable state of dilapidation, both as to the roof and the floors. The hospital, on the other hand, which is under the charge of an English matron, though not very well arranged, would be fairly adequate if some of the wards were not occupied by overflows from the adjoining poorhouse. In one of

the wards, in which was a patient suffering from typhoid fever, I saw more than a dozen homeless children, most of them quite healthy, for whom no room could be found elsewhere.

There is undoubtedly a very great amount of real privation in spite of the fact that the food and clothing of the negro cost but little and that he need not buy fuel in order to keep himself warm. While I noticed signs of sporadic destitution in several islands, in Antigua alone many of the inhabitants were manifestly suffering from physical weakness induced by insufficiency of nourishment. There was a prevailing listlessness and melancholy, which must strike every visitor who has observed the negro elsewhere in the West Indies.

The census returns for the present year will give corroborative evidence of the deplorable situation. At the time of writing I have no further information than is contained in two letters published by the West India Committee in one of their fortnightly circulars. From these it appears that in St. Kitts there has been a large reduction of population in the last decade, and in Antigua a falling off of 2,000 since the previous enumeration, bringing the number of inhabitants down to 34,000. In both islands there

is now a great preponderance of females over males, as the latter have gone away in search of work, leaving their women and children to look after themselves or become the recipients of public charity. And there is not the plausible explanation that the men have been drawn away by the promise of higher wages in the manner that the Jamaican negro was formerly attracted to Panama and is now attracted to the railway works in Ecuador. Some have gone to Dominica, more to the French and Dutch islands. It is a fine comment upon our rule in the West Indies that British negroes should be driven to seek employment under a foreign flag!

I will defer to a subsequent chapter the statement of my views concerning the general condition and prospects of the negroes, but I think I have said enough to show that they are intimately bound up with the future of the sugar industry. If further evidence be necessary, I adduce the authoritative conclusion of the Royal Commissioners that no other industry could completely replace sugar in such islands as Barbados, Antigua, and St. Kitts as a profitable cultivation and so as to give employment for the labouring population; and that in most of the other Colonies sugar may in time be replaced by other industries,

but only after the lapse of a considerable period and at the cost of much displacement of labour and consequent suffering. I lay particular stress upon this point because it is often contended that those who seek the rehabilitation of sugar do so mainly in order that money may be put into the pockets of the owners of estates, many of whom are absentees. But the latter are usually represented on the spot by white men, even the least desirable of whom must have some influence in diffusing a higher standard of civilisation among the negroes.

A word or two must be said as to the prevalence of absenteeism, which is no new symptom in the West Indies. Other things equal, it is of course preferable that a property should have a resident owner who will spend his money in the country and take a personal interest in his dependents. A salaried subordinate must be a very exceptional man if he will do so to the same extent as a benevolent proprietor. But we must take the facts as we find them. The comparatively prosperous estates in Trinidad and British Guiana are owned by companies or rich individuals who have interests in other parts of the world. Such men will not spend their lives in the tropics; the most they will do is to visit

their plantations in the winter. But though they be not ideal landlords, they are able to introduce the newest improvements and to tide over times of depression. I have been told by a friend who has every means of forming a sound opinion that during two bad years in the middle nineties at least half a million sterling was poured into Trinidad by the absentees. On the other hand, the small resident proprietors, being unable to hold out long without satisfactory returns, have in many cases been obliged to abandon cultivation and to throw their labourers out of employment. Speaking generally, is it not better for the workmen (I am referring of course solely to the sugar industry and to the free labourer, the indentured coolie not being subject to ordinary dismissal) to obtain constant employment from attorneys, even though some of them may have orders to realise every penny for absent proprietors, than to be dependent upon resident owners, who, with the best of intentions, may be too poor to cultivate their land properly, and so be compelled to reduce their staff of employees?

To return to the point from which we momentarily digressed. If the sugar industry were extinguished, the West Indies would be deprived of the presence in their midst, not only of the

representatives of the absentee proprietors, but of many of the resident owners, who, even if their land could be put to other uses, would not have the requisite capital to enable them to effect the change. I do not think this aspect of the question is sufficiently considered, and I wish I could give fuller information as to the fluctuation in numbers of the white population in the West Indies. I will take the four principal Colonies—Jamaica, British Guiana, Trinidad, and Barbados—pointing out that it is much more likely that a coloured person should return himself as white than the reverse. For Jamaica the figures are fairly satisfactory. The number of whites rose from 13,104 in 1871 to 14,432 in 1881 and 14,692 in 1891; but the centesimal proportion to the total population for the same periods fell from 2·59 to 2·48 and 2·29. Thus the higher element can barely be said to hold its own, and amounts to little more than $\frac{1}{40}$ of the whole. It is even smaller in British Guiana if we exclude the twelve thousand Portuguese, most of whom have been drawn from the Azores and Madeira. Upon this basis, the Europeans in 1891, the only year for which we have statistical information, numbered 4,558, or 1·637 of the total population. In the case of Trinidad I find that in 1831 the

'whites numbered 4,093, or nearly 9 per cent., but that in the last four enumerations the record has been based upon the birthplace and not upon the complexion of the individual. The number of persons born in the United Kingdom, to put the matter briefly, was 954 in 1871, as against 943 in 1891; but whereas in the former year they were ·87 per cent. of the whole, they were only ·47 per cent. in the latter, or less than one in every two hundred. In British Guiana and Trinidad of course the East Indian immigrants have largely affected the relative proportions of the races. Barbados has long been regarded as the one tropical island in which white colonisation has been successful over a period of years; but even here, to give a summary of the figures which I have collected, the fall from 1871 to 1891 is from 16,560 to 15,613, and in centesimal proportion from 10·2 to 8·6. The white troops, who are gradually being transferred to St. Lucia, are included in the enumeration.

I hold very strongly that any diminution in the number of whites such as I should anticipate from the failure of sugar would, granting what a small element they at present form outside of Barbados, be most detrimental to the future prosperity of the West Indies, and more particularly to that of

the negroes themselves, who, as is admitted by their best friends, urgently require continued contact with a higher race. This point is very strongly pressed by Mr. W. P. Livingstone, of Jamaica, who has noted the appearance among the whites of a more disciplined and responsible spirit, and adds that its successful persistence in some few cases indicates that the gravitation of environment may be resisted by the magnetism of will power and soul power. He is referring to the demoralising influence of the tropical climate even upon the strongest characters, an influence which must have been infinitely more deleterious in the days of slavery. It will be remembered that Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in "The Control of the Tropics," is equally insistent upon the value of the white element. But this would not be the only injurious consequence; the financial situation would soon be aggravated. As the purchasing power of the community would be smaller, imports would fall off, and the revenue, which is mainly derived from Customs duties, would except in Grenada and Dominica, which produce but little sugar, be entirely unequal to the demands made upon it. I am quite aware of the chronic complaints against the excessive cost of administration, and I must admit that

the reductions already effected prove that there was ground for dissatisfaction. But, subject to this reservation, the administrative system is such as to have elicited the admiration of all travellers, and, last but not least, of a member of the U.S. Geological Survey, Mr. Robert J. Hill. As an exemplification of the impressions which he gathered in the British Colonies, I am tempted to quote his comparison of Jamaica with adjoining countries, he having visited Cuba and Puerto Rico before the Spanish-American War:

"The universal aspect of order and the respect for law that everywhere prevail in Jamaica are no less conspicuous than the natural beauties of the island, and are noted by any one who has travelled in the more unruly places of the tropics. The dread of unconscious violation of some trivial law which haunts one in Cuba, the feeling of being watched as in Puerto Rico, the suspicion of some other person's hand in your pocket as in Mexico, the fear of brushing against prevailing contagion at every step as in Martinique, Santo Domingo, and Haiti, are sensations which do not worry the traveller here. The stranger is welcomed with a sincere hospitality and courteous greeting; the island is clean, and the laws are for the protection of the visitor as well as of the resident—not

the robbery of the individual or the enrichment of the official."

But even if the administrative staff, which may be capable of further reductions, could be supported at its requisite level, whence would provision be made for the payment of the police, for education, or for medical relief?

In any case, the labourers and not the owners would be the greatest sufferers; and the former would be shut out from the best opening available to them for improving their circumstances. The preparation of cocoa for the market entails no skilled labour; that of coffee very little; while in every sugar factory there are several places filled by negroes which demand intelligence and a sense of responsibility.

Hard times, it is to be feared, are in store for them, as lands were planted with canes when the price of sugar was very high, which, in some of the islands at least, will never again be able to grow them at a profit to the cultivator. Any contrary anticipation is precluded when we consider that not only is the production of beet sugar on the upward grade, but canes are being increasingly grown in India, Java, some of the South American Republics, and other countries. There must be a displacement of labour in the West

Indies, and a smaller demand for it, as no other crop requires anything like as much work per acre of cultivated land as sugar.

As I am most anxious to prove to the hilt my contention that the labouring population is fundamentally interested in the fate of the sugar industry, I will insert at this point certain observations upon cane-farming which would otherwise have been relegated to the chapter dealing specifically with the negro and the East Indian. Hitherto we have considered the members of either race as wage-earners, for it must be recollected that in Trinidad and British Guiana most of the agricultural work on sugar estates is done by East Indians; in this aspect they come before us as independent cultivators. What I have to say upon the subject will come in by way of comment upon an extract from the report of the Royal Commission of 1897:

"It is recognised in the present day that the business of manufacturing sugar may often with advantage be separated from the actual cultivation of the canes. It is found convenient in many places that farmers should engage in the business of growing canes, and should sell the ripe cane to a central factory. This system is being tried, and with some success, in Trinidad,

though a strong and apparently well-founded opinion has been expressed to the effect that, so far as can now be seen, the central factories in Trinidad can never depend entirely on canes so grown, but must, in order to ensure a continuous supply of canes for manufacture, possess a considerable amount of cultivation of their own. It was alleged that the presence of indentured coolies is essential to the maintenance of the industry, as only in this way could a reliable supply of labour be secured at all times.

The owners of sugar estates in Trinidad appear to be fully alive to the advantages of the cane-farming system, and anxious to introduce it as far as practicable. The general adoption of the system would be attended with many advantages, and we are of opinion that it is one which the Government might legitimately assist, where practicable, by providing means of communication to facilitate cane-farming in suitable localities. Both the Creoles and the East India immigrants prefer growing canes on their own plots to working as labourers on the estates, and they are willing to sell their canes at a price which is below the cost at which the estates can produce them."

Before bringing the above record up to date,

it may be convenient to summarise the meagre results obtained elsewhere in the West Indies. In British Guiana, though some of the negroes have freehold property, they have not yet risen above the level of yams and bananas. Many small settlers in Jamaica grow canes, but usually, I understand, crush them in their own primitive mills, which are worked by cattle. Cane-farming was started in St. Lucia at the time of the establishment of central factories, but is said to be declining in popularity. In Montserrat the sugar industry is carried on by large proprietors working their own estates, under the metayer system, and by small holders. With regard to the second class, it is contended that, if the cultivation is bad, this is due to the fact that the cultivators have no permanent interest in the land, and believe that the owners would take it away from them if they increased its value. Hence the remedy would be found in some form of security of tenure. There may be some truth in this, but I should think it more likely that the inferior cultivation is to be explained by the tendency of the negro, which is exemplified in his production of ground provisions, to get what he can out of a piece of land and then abandon it. Probably also his agricultural ignorance must be taken into account.

Upon my remarking to Mr. Watts, of Antigua, upon the wretched appearance of some canes grown by peasants, he told me that though most of these men, who were freeholders, spent part of their time upon estates, and consequently saw the methods of intensive cultivation, they never seemed to appreciate their value or to think of applying them to their own holdings.

These drawbacks have impressed themselves very strongly upon Mr. Carmody, the Government Analyst of Trinidad, who says, in a paper read before the last Agricultural Conference, that "the cane-farming cultivation, as carried on at present, cannot fail to increase the large area of exhausted lands; and this must have a very prejudicial effect on the future of the sugar industry." Mr. Carmody bases this opinion upon the impracticability of enforcing upon cane-farmers the use of manures, which is essential if the fertility of the land is not to be diminished. In St. Lucia, however, it is the custom upon one of the estates to supply artificial manure to the cane-farmers, and to deduct its cost from the price paid for the canes. Whether this system would be suitable to Trinidad or not, we must assume that the estate owners know their own business best, and that they would not have been so ready to

encourage cane-farming unless it had coincided with their interests. The cane-farmers in Trinidad may be divided into three classes: those who grow canes on their own lands; those who do so on lands rented; those who do so on lands belonging to factory holders. The first can dispose of their canes where they prefer, except so far as they may be hampered by difficulties of transport; the second also, provided there be no special conditions in their leases; while the farmers of the third class will of course be tied down to the particular factory. The usual price is 6s. per ton for growing canes, 9s. for canes delivered at the factory or upon one of its tramways. The latter arrangement is the more satisfactory: it obviates any possibility of complaint upon the part of the farmer that his canes were not reaped at the right time. Upon these terms the industry has progressed so rapidly that, whereas it was not seriously started more than thirteen years ago, in 1901 the factories manufactured 169,918 tons of purchased canes, as compared with 434,003 grown upon estates. Passing over 1900, which was a bad year, these figures compare with 106,000 and 426,000 tons in 1899 respectively. At the same time there has been a large increase in the number of farmers. In

1899 there were 2,826 East Indians, and 3,870 West Indians; in 1901, 3,819 of the former and 4,737 of the latter. It is eminently satisfactory that this should be a form of industry which appeals to the members of both races, and especially to those who could not be induced to work in the cane-fields for wages.

I find it hard to reconcile these facts with Mr. Carmody's pessimism. Granted that the estate owners would, when cane-farming was in its infancy, be in the dark as to the manner in which the farmers would cultivate the land, they now know what they have to expect, and yet, as we have seen, they are extending the area of the industry. New lands have, it is true, been brought into cultivation, but not to such an extent as to account for the increase. On the other hand, while Mr. Carmody is not the man to speak at random, I have received from a trustworthy source a corroboration of his apprehensions. So I cannot but fear that some of the owners are acting in a short-sighted manner. If that be so, their action is easily explicable. Owing to the scarcity of labour, which is due to the limitation placed by the Government upon the number of immigrants that may be imported annually, and to the tendency of the immigrants

to leave the estate as soon as they have concluded their five years' indenture, owners are unable to cultivate all their land. Consequently, they have every inducement to let some of it and thereby swell the amount of canes that will be treated in their factory. And there is another consideration: apart from the fluctuations in the price of sugar, the greatest element of uncertainty in the planter's calculations lies in the varying weight of canes produced to the acre in different years as the result of favourable or unfavourable climatic conditions. For instance, the acreage under canes being presumably the same, the total production of sugar in Trinidad fell from 58,800 tons in 1899 to 46,000 in the following year. As the cost of manufacture does not vary, the owner is naturally tempted, especially if he pays a low price for the canes, to shift upon others the risks attending their cultivation. We therefore find them displaying great eagerness to get occupants for their land; at least, this deduction seems warranted from Mr. Carmody's statement that "the majority of cane-farmers start without land, capital, or responsibility, and without any permanent interest in the cultivation they undertake. They cannot even provide labour without a suitable system of advances.

From the estate owners they get the use of the land free, or rent it for a nominal amount, and very often the advances above referred to."

Under these circumstances it might have been thought that the factory owners would seek gradually to become manufacturers and nothing else, especially as cane-farmers can admittedly produce canes at a cheaper rate than the estates because they personally superintend the work in the fields. Besides, tillage can be done most usefully at the time that the factories are busiest. But a complete separation of the two functions is at present impossible on account of the irregularity with which canes are delivered by the farmers. Mr. Carmody gives a set of figures as to the supply of farmer's canes at one factory on consecutive days. I extract a brief specimen: Feb. 24th, 92 tons; Feb. 25th, 164 tons; Feb. 26th, 345 tons. As many thousands of pounds have been sunk in the machinery and appointments of a factory, which must be kept fully employed if an adequate return is to be obtained upon the investment, the owners depend principally upon the canes which they have themselves cultivated. As Sir Nevile Lubbock put it, when he took the chair for me at the meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, "the farmers' canes are

brought in carts and other ways from considerable distances to the sugar mills, but if there happens to be bad weather for a few days the supply may not be forthcoming, so that if the owners were to rely entirely on the farmers for their canes, they would be liable to have the factories periodically stopped, and that would not be conducive to economy." And whereas he was doubtful whether, under present conditions, the farmers ought to produce more than one-fourth of the total crop, in the present year they have exceeded this amount, and have experienced much difficulty in getting the factories to take the whole of their output. In the Savana Grande district it was represented to the Governor in July, when the whole of the crop should have been manufactured, that twenty thousand or more tons of canes were still standing in the farmers' fields. This is the principal problem before the farmer which may be set against the owner's risk of the exhaustion of his soil. It will be overcome to some extent by the new roads which are to be made in various parts whereby the farmer will be less tied down as regards accessibility to one particular factory, and it is hoped that the owners may increase their boiling power or arrange to work, where they do not do so at

present, by night as well as by day. Many representations have also been made as to the high rates of interest charged to farmers who may desire to obtain advances upon growing crops. The evil is no doubt a very real one, except to those who, being under agreement to send their canes to a particular factory, receive assistance from the prospective purchasers. But the cane-farmers are not the only small cultivators in the West Indies who are pressed for money; so it will be more convenient to recur to this subject under a more general heading.[1]

As the discussion of cane-farming concludes my detailed inquiry into the prospects of the sugar industry, it will be convenient to append two general remarks in order to make my position quite clear.

In the first place, I do not claim that the imposition of the countervailing duties will by itself save West Indian sugar. The fall in the price of sugar in Great Britain is only directly due to a very limited extent to the Continental bounties. The main cause, which must continue to operate, whatever be our fiscal policy, is to be found in the increased production of sugar owing to its extraction from the beet as well as the

[1] See p. 142.

cane, the intensive cultivation of the former and the selection of the richest varieties, and, finally, the invention of machinery calculated to secure the greatest return at the cheapest rate from the raw product. As, therefore, the price of sugar is never likely to rise again to any material extent, except through a temporary cause such as the Spanish-American War, all we can do is to guarantee to our Colonies an area of equitable competition; it will then rest with them (and I have no fear as to the result) to increase the productivity of the cane by experiments carried on in hearty collaboration with the Imperial Department of Agriculture, and, where their machinery is antiquated, to replace it by the newest and most economical appliances.

But, secondly, I am told that I am unduly hopeful, because the American countervailing duties have not shut out European sugar in favour of that grown in the West Indies. I see no reason why they should; they do not favour the latter, but simply place both upon an equal footing. It would be truer to say that the competition between them is so close that the slightest advantage given to the one is sufficient to turn the balance against the other.

It will have been noticed that in this chapter

I have had to make constant references to the trading relations of the West Indies with the Mother Country, the United States, and Canada. They will also, I find, recur in the next chapter; so I have abandoned my original intention of treating them under a separate heading, and shall now try to give some idea of the general trend of the external trade of the West Indies.

In the days before the American War of Independence the West Indies, speaking broadly, sold their sugar to Great Britain, which sent manufactured articles to America, whence the West Indies obtained their current supplies. It is unnecessary to follow the dislocations in trade caused by the subsequent wars, or to pause until we reach recent years, when, as we know too well, a link has been broken in this triple chain. If the West Indies import largely from the United States, we cannot hope to redress the balance in the old way. And I think most of us hanker after a direct trade between the Mother Country and the Colonies. We cannot, therefore, view with equanimity the increased hold which the American continent is getting upon the trade of the British West Indies; nor can we console ourselves with the thought that the Canadians are keeping it in the family.

The following table, taken from the last Annual Report of Jamaica, will give an idea as to how the foreign trade of that Colony is distributed in percentages of the whole:

| | Exports. 1895–96. | Exports. 1899–1900. | Imports. 1895–96. | Imports. 1899–1900. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom ... | 27·6 | 19·2 | 48·1 | 47·2 |
| United States ... | 57·0 | 63·6 | 41·8 | 43·0 |
| Canada ... ... | 1·6 | 1·6 | 7·5 | 7·1 |
| Other Countries ... | 13·8 | 15·6 | 2·6 | 2·7 |

Owing to its geographical position and the expansion of the fruit trade, Jamaica does more of its business with the United States than do the other Colonies. But the American share is everywhere increasing, even though but slowly. Take Trinidad for instance: 39 per cent. of the exports went to the United States in 1899 as compared with 34½ in 1895, while in the same period the imports from that country increased from 20 to 27½ per cent. A similar tendency would be found if the inquiry were extended to Barbados and British Guiana. In none of these Colonies has Canada secured much of a foothold. The figures being practically identical for the two years, it may be said briefly that Canada supplies 8½, 5, and 3¼ per cent. of the imports of Barbados, British Guiana, and Trinidad, respectively.

Canadian companies have converted to electric traction the tramways of Kingston and Georgetown, but Canadian goods in general are not much sought after, although British Guiana and all the British islands are in direct steam communication with Canada. The connection with British Guiana has, I believe, been established but recently; but, judging from my own experiences and from what I heard, the subsidised service is not very satisfactory.

Hitherto British exports to the West Indies have not fallen off to the same extent as our imports from those Colonies. Can we depend upon this state of things to continue? I doubt it. West Indian merchants may be inclined to deal in the market with which they are familiar; but, sooner or later, they are bound to discover the greater convenience of buying from their best customers. Must we, then, resign ourselves to handing over the West Indian trade to America? Not in the least, if we may judge from the fact that, though it would not be taxed in the United States, the greater portion of the cocoa grown in Trinidad is consigned to Europe. If, however, we continue to pursue our step-motherly policy in regard to the principal West Indian product, we may discover that it is not easy to regain an

outlet for our manufactures when once our rivals have firmly established themselves.

Apart from increased commercial activity, I found no signs of Americanisation in the British West Indies. Many Americans visit them in the winter, and some of the hotels are managed by their compatriots; but the whole trend of feeling is absolutely British. It is, however, to be regretted that the telegraphic news, which forms the only source of information until the arrival of the mails, is prepared in New York and is necessarily coloured by American prepossessions. But the West Indian Colonies, after all, being but of secondary importance, must put up with secondary facilities. Hence, though the inhabitants may grumble, it is not to be wondered at that, outside of Jamaica, one Telegraph Company holds a monopoly; that the Colonial Bank has no competitors in most of the Colonies; and that the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company has not been kept up to the mark by strenuous rivals.

Through the generosity of the Imperial Government, Jamaica has been assisted to obtain a second cable and a direct service of steamers, and many of the other islands have been aided in accordance with their immediate

requirements. Gratitude is not wanting among West Indian colonists for our solicitude on their behalf; but there is a certain impatience that we seem unable to realise the inherent justice of their request for the imposition of countervailing duties. In the preceding pages I have sought to explain the strength of the claim and the precarious character of the alternative market for West Indian sugar in the United States.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER RESOURCES

"THE sugar planters," says Mr. Bryan Edwards,[1] "by being cheaply and regularly supplied with horses, provisions, and lumber, were enabled to adopt the system of management not only most advantageous to themselves, but also to the Mother Country. Much of the land which must otherwise have been applied to the cultivation of provisions, for the maintenance of their negroes and the raising of cattle, was appropriated to the cultivation of sugar."

This policy, economically wise as it may have been when the price of sugar was very high, gives the key to many of the subsequent sufferings of the West Indies. It worked well enough while supplies could be obtained from the

[1] "History of the West Indies (1794)," vol. ii. p. 400.

Colonies now forming a portion of the United States; but when, these having obtained their independence, the Home Authorities compelled the West Indies to seek from the British North American Colonies goods which they scarcely raised in sufficient abundance for their own requirements; and when, in addition, prolonged warfare endangered marine traffic, many thousand of negroes are known to have perished from starvation. During this period, moreover, a succession of violent hurricanes intensified the prevailing distress and pointed the moral that, if the West Indies should not be too dependent upon foreign food, neither are they, nor ever will they be, able to dispense with it entirely.

But while the cultivation of sugar was being extended, other staple products were not being neglected. We are told by Bryan Edwards that, in the seventeenth century, the principal exports were cocoa,[1] indigo, and hides; while, just before his time, they had been sugar, molasses and rum, indigo, cocoa and coffee. But indigo had been destroyed by disease, and cocoa had been handicapped by the fact that the duty upon it in England was higher than that upon tea, a

[1] More properly cacao; but I have preferred the popular designation.

preference accorded to the foreigner which makes our author somewhat indignant. On the other hand, he notes that, owing to the reduction of the duty upon coffee from 1s. 6d. to 6d. per lb., its exportation from Jamaica alone increased nearly threefold in sixteen years, amounting in 1790 to more than one and three-quarter million lbs. Minor exports included ginger, cotton, woods, dyes, pimento and hides. It is noteworthy that few of the plants are indigenous to the West Indies; in fact, the famous Bourbon cane, which has been so remarkably successful, was not introduced until 1796.

We may pass over the first half of last century with the remark that other industries were more hardly hit than sugar by the abolition of the slave trade and the subsequent emancipation of the slaves. To give but one instance: in 1829 British Guiana had 230 sugar estates and 174 coffee and cotton estates, nearly all in full cultivation; while, twenty years later, the number of sugar estates had fallen to 180, and the coffee and cotton estates had almost entirely disappeared. That the pre-eminence of sugar was indisputed for a further period in some cases where it has since been dethroned is proved by the fact that, as recently as in 1881, the products

of the cane accounted for 77 per cent. of the total value of the exports from Jamaica. Their fall to a relative value of but 18 per cent. in 1899 will, so far as it has not already been dealt with, be explained in the present chapter.

The West Indian Colonies continue, as in the past, to be devoted almost entirely to agriculture. The principal exception is British Guiana on the mainland, where hopeful anticipations are held as to the future of the gold industry. The latest figures are somewhat inconclusive, as during the five years 1895–99 the annual output has ranged round 120,000 oz., which would be worth about £450,000. But the most promising gold-bearing areas are near the Venezuelan frontier, and, until the exact line of demarcation had been fixed, the Government of British Guiana could not insure the protection of British subjects working in districts over which their ownership was disputed. Moreover, the award of the Arbitration tribunal is of so recent a date that prospectors have not yet been able to take advantage of the fact that British Guiana obtained almost all the territory that it claimed. When I was in the Colony at the beginning of this year there were signs of a substantial revival, and concessions had been

granted for gold-dredging purposes upon certain rivers in the interior. The prospects of quartz-mining were not thought to be very promising; but the area was so vast that valuable discoveries might at any time be made. And the work of individual prospectors had been simplified by the geological survey of the metalliferous regions which had been carried out by officials of the Government and had given some indications of a very satisfactory nature. I have before me as I write, reports on the Geology of the North-Western District (1897), of the Mazaruni and Puruni rivers, and of the Essequibo, Potaro, Konawaruk and Demerara rivers, both dated 1900; but when I attempt to master their contents, I find, being neither a geologist nor a mining expert, that I am getting altogether out of my depth. So I prefer to signalise their existence to such as may have the ability and desire to understand them, and to confine myself to the remark that a scientific exposition of the potentialities should give an impetus to the exploitation of the mineral resources. I heard a good deal also about diamonds, and, since I left, there are said to have been sensational discoveries. However that may be, the Jews were arriving and the De Beers Company were going

to get a report from some of their experts. Should the mineral resources come up to current expectations, the influx of capital and population is bound to consolidate the prosperity of the Colony. A solution will also be forthcoming of the greatest difficulty, the absence of means of communication, which, as we shall see later, retards the development of the vast resources of the interior. In the meanwhile, the Colony obtains some £20,000 annually from fees, licences, and the royalty of 5 per cent.

Neither Barbados nor the Leeward or Windward Islands have mineral resources of any importance, though copper was formerly worked at Virgin Gorda, in the Presidency of the Virgin Islands. When I was in Jamaica the existence of this metal in payable quantities was asserted in an interesting letter in the press; but I do not understand that it has yet been corroborated officially.

In Trinidad, however, coal is known to exist in various parts of the island, and there is a vote upon this year's estimates for the purpose of testing the value of the deposits. If the coal is of good quality and in any considerable amount, the importance of Trinidad as a commercial centre will be enormously increased. Another

mineral asset, the famous pitch lake at La Brea, contributed £45,000 to the revenue in 1899. The lake has been leased to an American Company for a term of years of which twenty-nine are unexpired, upon the condition of a minimum annual output of asphalt and the payment upon it of a royalty to the Government. But Trinidad has lost the command of the asphalt market as a similar lake is now being worked at Bermudez in Venezuela, which, according to the last Annual Report from Trinidad, is ten times as large and contains asphalt purer in the proportion of 97 to 56. The demand for asphalt, however, is growing, and there are greater difficulties in shipping it from Bermudez than from Trinidad. The British lake is less than a mile from a deep-water harbour, to which the asphalt is ingeniously conveyed by a double chain of aerial buckets. Furthermore, there are rival American claimants for the Venezuelan lake, the new Venezuelan President, General Castro, having cancelled the concession granted by one of his predecessors; and the chronic political disturbances must hamper any industrial enterprise. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is most unlikely that the pitch industry in Trinidad will be injured to any great extent by its Venezuelan competitor.

We may thus conclude that, with the exception of Trinidad, British Guiana, and possibly Jamaica, the internal resources of the West Indian Colonies are purely agricultural. But, before we consider them, there is another industry which must engage our attention for a few moments.

One of the most interesting papers read at the last Agricultural Conference was that of Dr. J. E. Duerden, curator of the Institute of the Museum of Jamaica, upon the marine resources of the British West Indies. He started with the fact that, with the exception of British Guiana, which has a long sea-board, all the Colonies are islands surrounded by tropical seas teeming with fish and other forms of life. It was possible that the fisheries could never attain the proportions characteristic of temperate waters, with their vast supplies of cod, mackerel, and herring, but there was every indication that a study and better knowledge of the habits and life-history of the fish, along with experiments as to the best means of capturing and curing them, would result in the extension of the industry, and thus in supplanting in some measure the imported cured fish by the native fish. At the present time, Jamaica, with its coast-line of 400

miles and population of 700,000, imported fish annually to the value of nearly £150,000. Unnatural as this might appear, it was not to be wondered at when the fishing industry was left, throughout the islands, mainly in the hands of the negroes and was conducted without much organisation, capital, or enterprise. A few years ago, indeed, a London syndicate which had been formed to examine the possibility of establishing a fishery industry on a large scale in the Caribbean Sea, had met with but indifferent success; but its efforts were suspended too early to afford conclusive evidence of the actual potentialities of the area investigated. One fact was clearly demonstrated, that fishing operations on a large scale in the tropics would necessitate the use of vessels supplied with cool chambers.

Without following Dr. Duerden into technical details, I would note his remark that the artificial cultivation of many species of fish, lobsters, oysters, and sponges, all of which are found in the West Indies, is in places carried out with the same degree of care as that of land crops. And one of the first acts of the United States Government upon coming into possession of Puerto Rico, had been to send a steamer of the Fishery Commission to examine the possibilities of the

surrounding waters. Similarly he hoped that the Imperial Department of Agriculture might, in the absence of a distinct organisation, interest itself in the fisheries. As Dr. Morris subsequently pointed out, such a step could of course not be taken without the consent of the Imperial Government which supplied the funds at his disposal, and he did not think that any applications in this direction would be successful. But I have little doubt that, were the means available, object-lessons in the best methods of curing fish would eventually be as valuable to the fisherman as agricultural instruction to the peasant proprietor.

In the meanwhile there is not only no progress, but actual retrogression. In spite of the fact that the turtle is very prolific, the supply, which comes from the coast of Central America and the Cays islands adjacent to Jamaica, is no longer equal to the demand. Dr. Duerden believes, however, that if the 200 to 500 eggs laid by a female turtle during a season, most of which are successfully hatched, were watched, and the young were reared under control up to a certain size and then set free in the surrounding waters, there would soon be a great increase in their numbers. And the best method of transportation of live turtle is

also a matter of concern. The mortality between the capture and the landing in England varies from 25 to 50 per cent., and the homeward passenger, to quote my own feeling, who sees the turtles first huddled together amidships and then slung into a hold by a cord drawn round their necks has an uncomfortable impression that there is unnecessary cruelty. However that may be (and the stench that reaches some of the cabins proves that the mortality is not arrested in the hold), I cannot doubt, returning to the broad issue, that a strong case could be made out for an Imperial Department dealing with the fisheries of the West Indies. Among such institutions Dr. Duerden, after mentioning the good work done in the United States and Canada and the special efforts of the Scottish and Irish Fishery Boards, finds a direct analogy with his contention in Cape Colony, where "as the result of the investigations carried out under the direction of a marine biologist, as a subdivision of the Department of Agriculture, a vast enterprise has been built up, and trawling areas of over a thousand miles have been discovered, and are rapidly becoming an important source of wealth and food supply to the Colony."

Dr. Duerden's researches deserve a wider

notice than we can spare, as we must now pass on to general agricultural resources other than sugar. I desire to place within a narrow compass information which I have gathered from a number of publications.

At the outset one fact should be brought home to those who refuse to sympathise with the West Indian planter because he has not substituted other products for sugar: in some cases such a substitution would not be possible. It is the opinion of the best authorities that sugar is the only staple crop which could be grown successfully on the coast lands of British Guiana, in Barbados, and in the greater part of Antigua. The most that could be done would be to grow ground provisions to a greater extent to meet local requirements or to increase the productivity of the soil by planting onions, as in Antigua, and other vegetables between the canes. Lands such as these must go out of serious cultivation if the sugar industry is extinguished.

In the next category are St. Kitts, Nevis, St. Vincent and Tobago, all of which give far too much attention to sugar, while they have a climate and soil suitable for the growth of most tropical and sub-tropical plants. As regards the two former, where sugar holds undivided sway, Mr. Watts,

the representative of the Imperial Department of Agriculture in the Leeward Islands, maintains that St. Kitts has land second to none in the West Indies for the cultivation of tobacco, and that Nevis should do well with cocoa. He told me that an Englishman proposed to grow early potatoes in St. Kitts and ship them to the English market. St. Vincent exports arrowroot as well as sugar; Tobago, sugar, cocoa, and a number of miscellaneous products.

All the remaining islands have important industries other than sugar, with the exception of Montserrat, where the lime trees were uprooted in the hurricane of 1899. In St. Lucia the value of the collective sugar products is about equal to that of all the other products; in Trinidad cocoa overtops sugar, the value of the exports in 1899 having been £779,000 and £715,000 respectively; in Jamaica, in the same year, ten exports exceeded £50,000 in value, the list being headed by fruit, £749,000, and sugar and rum, £326,000; while Dominica exported but little sugar, and Grenada actually did not make enough for its own consumption. In the former island, limes and cocoa predominated; in the latter cocoa and nutmegs.

After these statistics I will spare my readers a

detailed statement of the rate at which the so-called minor industries have expanded: suffice it to say that, in 1884, the value of cocoa exported from Trinidad was £433,000, and of fruit exported from Jamaica, £271,000. A comparison with the figures given above will exemplify the extraordinary rate of expansion.

One observation suggests itself immediately. Trinidad has increased the production of an article which keeps for a comparatively long period; Jamaica of one, or rather of a series of articles, as the term "fruit" includes oranges and cocoa-nuts as well as bananas, which, being extremely perishable, are valueless unless they can be transported to a market rapidly and at a particular moment. Here is one of the explanations of the lack of progress of some of the smaller islands. The cultivators have no inducement to produce more fruit than can be consumed locally until they are assured of the regular arrival of properly equipped steamers. For the proper equipment is of the very essence of success: by the introduction of a simple method of ventilating ships with air fans worked by steam an equable temperature is maintained which greatly assists in keeping fruit in good condition during long voyages.

This point impressed itself so strongly upon the Royal Commissioners of 1897, that they recommended that a subsidy should be granted for some years by the Imperial Government to secure the establishment of regular steam communication from St. Vincent and Dominica to the United States, with a view to the transmission of fruit to New York. If the experiment proved successful, it might be extended to other islands, but, owing to the uncertainty involved, it should, in the first place, be limited to the two above mentioned. In another portion of their report they insisted, as a condition antecedent to the establishment of the subsidised service, that each of these islands should undertake to put at least 2,000 acres under banana cultivation.

Though this Royal Commission has been more successful than that of 1884 in the effect given to its proposals, this particular recommendation has not been acted upon. Prompted presumably by the desire that West Indian trade should be fostered rather with Canada than with the United States, especially in view of the concession made to the West Indies in the Canadian tariff, the Imperial Authorities have agreed to pay for five years £13,500 annually, an equivalent disbursement being made by the Dominion Government,

to a line of steamers plying from Canada *viâ* Bermuda to the lesser Antilles and British Guiana. The contract has been secured by Messrs. Pickford and Black, whose steamers already called at some of the West Indian ports. I am not quite clear as to the earlier route, and I do not think British Guiana was included. If so, it is a distinct gain to have a British connection between it and Trinidad at regular intervals.

The Royal Commissioners aimed at a double object: the provision of more frequent communication between the islands and of ships adapted for the carriage of fruit. As to the latter, the Canadian Company is not to be blamed for not having done what it was not called upon to do in its contract. But, on general lines, it has failed to give satisfaction in the West Indies. One of the steamers was wrecked on the coast of Grenada under circumstances which were the reverse of creditable. Doubtless the Company was placed thereby in a difficulty, and had to charter another steamer temporarily. Making, nevertheless, all reasonable allowances, there is no reason why the food on the substituted steamer should have been disgusting and the cabins filthy. Such, however, was the case, and I speak from personal experience, as my wife and

I underwent these discomforts when travelling by this highly subsidised line between British Guiana and Trinidad.

None of the Colonies except Jamaica have, therefore, as yet any inducement to grow fruit for exportation. It is true that the steamers of the Royal Mail Company call at each of them fortnightly; but all cargo, to its obvious detriment if perishable, is shifted into the oceanic steamer in the open roadstead of Barbados. It is generally believed in the West Indies, I think with some reason, that the Royal Mail Company, with its gigantic annual subsidy of £80,000, though some of it is swallowed up in unremunerative services, has been too much inclined to take advantage of the practical monopoly which it has enjoyed for so long, and has failed to push trade as it might have done. Every West Indian, however, has a kindly feeling towards the Company owing to the sixty years during which it has regularly carried on its operations.

Personally, we have been very lucky with our fruit. The limes which we brought home with us from Antigua arrived in excellent condition, and were much appreciated by our friends both as condiments and as an ingredient in the preparation of cooling beverages. Their flavour was

preferred to that of lemons. Subsequently, we have received more limes and a barrel of pine-apples which cost us about 6d. each landed in London. They were in first-class condition, but only kept for a few days.

A trial shipment of bananas has just been attempted from Dominica, but unsuccessfully. Badly handled at the point of departure, they were further injured, owing to bad weather, during the transfer at Barbados. A similar fate, some years ago, befell a more ambitious enterprise in Trinidad. In order to encourage a trade in fruit, a subsidy of £5,500 was given to a line of steamships trading between that island and New York. But the first shipments unfortunately consisted of fruit inferior in size and badly packed, which naturally sold at low prices ; and it soon became evident that the subsidy was premature, as there was not a sufficient quantity of suitable fruit to maintain a regular trade.

On the general question of the shipment of fruit from the Lesser Antilles, it is to be noted that the best harbours in these islands are on the west coast, which is sheltered from the prevailing North-East Trade wind. Grenada has already three small vessels which make the round of the island. Trinidad and Dominica are getting

vessels for a similar purpose, and the former island will also have more frequent communication with Tobago. In the dearth of good roads in Trinidad and Dominica, these additional facilities should be beneficial.

There is an equal lack of progress to report in the case of British Guiana. Favourable proposals were made ten years ago by the Boston Fruit Company for the establishment of a fruit service with New York; but nothing came of them, as, while bananas were only grown to a small extent, there was no disposition on the part of the farmers to embark in the industry.

It might, therefore, have been thought that there was nothing much in it, were it not for the brilliant exception of Jamaica. What bananas have done for that island will be seen from two extracts dealing with one of the northern districts.

In 1861, after a personal visit, Trollope wrote that "Port Antonio was once a goodly town, and the country round it, the parish of Portland, is as fertile as any in the island. But now there is hardly a sugar estate in the whole parish. It is given up to the growth of yams and plantains. It has become a provision ground for negroes, and the palmy days of the town are of course gone."

Twenty-six years later Dr. Morris could write the following glowing report:

"At first the fruit was purchased in small quantities from negro peasants in the neighbourhood of Port Antonio. There was practically no capital invested in the cultivation. The settlers were induced to grow bananas in small patches of an acre or two and to deliver the fruit at the port of shipment. In the aggregate these small patches produced bananas sufficient to fill all the first ships engaged in the trade. The fruit trade in Jamaica is now the means of circulating nearly £500,000 annually amongst all classes of the community, and this large sum is immediately available in establishing other and more permanent industries."

This vast improvement is entirely due to the Boston (now United) Fruit Company, which, during the season, which lasts from March to August, has despatched as many as six to eight steamers weekly from Jamaican ports to Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, and the rate of progress has been well maintained: the number of bunches exported increased from 4¼ millions in 1895 to 8 millions in 1899, and would probably have touched 10 millions but for the violent rains and windstorms in the autumn of that year.

When it is considered that a bunch contains more than 100 bananas, some idea may be formed of the magnitude of the trade which is being tapped by the new direct service between Bristol and Jamaica.

From the most recent information it appears that the steamers of the United Fruit Company are not calling at so many Jamaican ports as formerly, and that the Company is gradually confining itself to the carriage of the produce of its own estates. Incidentally, be it noted what a blow this must be to the small settlers of whose bananas it has hitherto been the largest purchaser. I do not know the reason of this change of policy, but it is possible that the Company, which owns estates in, and runs ships to, Colombia, Central America, and San Domingo as well as Jamaica, is restricting its Jamaican trade because it does not care to bid against a subsidised competitor. In that event, the new service, which is conducted by Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co., is a very doubtful blessing to Jamaica, as it does not provide more than one ship a fortnight! The stipulation that 20,000 bunches must be purchased by the contractors in Jamaica before each homeward journey will go a very small way to meet

the shortage; and the fact that within five years vessels must be employed capable of carrying not less than 5,000 tons of cargo (the present minimum being 3,000) will not improve matters much unless the success of the scheme is such as to bring in private enterprise on a large scale. As the first steamer did not return to Bristol until last March, it is impossible to forecast the future prospects; but I understand that the bananas have been landed in good condition and have been disposed of satisfactorily.

The question has two other important aspects. Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co. are a pushing firm, and, by circulars and handbooks, are making Jamaica better known to the British public. At the same time, the press is seconding their efforts, having been attracted by the glamour of an Imperial undertaking. By these various agencies British capitalists may be induced in increasing numbers to turn their attention to West Indian possibilities.

My second point is this: provided that Jamaica can build up a profitable trade with the Mother Country, it will have a far more secure commercial position than in its present dependence upon the United States. It is an

open secret that Jamaica desired a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, not so much for the sake of the sugar industry as in order to obviate the danger of a duty upon its bananas. Citrous fruits are heavily taxed in the interests of the growers of California and Florida, and it is feared that a similar fate may befall bananas if Cuba and the Philippines are admitted, similarly with Puerto Rico and Hawaii, into the American commercial union. It is almost superfluous to point out that the present policy of the United States is to impose heavy duties upon all articles which are, or might be, produced within its borders. And in Cuba and Puerto Rico, however it may be in the Philippines, are many districts thoroughly suited to the cultivation of bananas.

I should have been glad to have been able to give some idea as to the extent to which the United States now gets its bananas from various sources; but the American Statistical Abstract is unfortunately silent upon that point. On the whole, being unaware of the motives which are influencing the United Fruit Company, I regard the new steamship service as a wise form of insurance, and I think that Jamaica should gladly pay the annual charge of £20,000,

since the Imperial Parliament contributes an equal amount.

It should be remembered, nevertheless, that it is far easier to transport fruit on a voyage of five days' duration than on one of twelve or more. In the higher figure I am thinking not only of Jamaica but of the other islands with which it is desirable that a similar trade should be established. But were suitable facilities forthcoming, it would still be essential that the fruit should be picked at the right time and properly packed. If the shipping company is the purchaser, it may be trusted to use its right of rejection; but if the fruit is consigned by the producer, there is no such safeguard. Readers of my earlier work, "Australasian Democracy," will recollect that some of the Australian Governments have insisted, in the broad interests of the community, upon the rigid inspection of exports. They say that a careless exporter may injure others besides himself by bringing disrepute upon the goods of his country. If this danger exists in Australia, it cannot be absent in the West Indies, where the average intelligence is much lower; but it may also be due to dishonesty. As far as it is the result of ignorance, remedial measures are being adopted in the diffusion of

agricultural instruction under the Imperial Department of Agriculture and otherwise. But, as the process will necessarily be a slow one, I am strongly in favour of official inspection. My views are supported by Dr. Morris in the course of the following sentences which will aptly conclude what I have to say about West Indian fruit :

" Besides bananas there is a favourable opening for oranges and pine-apples. In both cases it is essential that only the best fruit be selected for shipment. It should also be packed in suitable cases and presented in as attractive a condition as possible. Last winter (1896-97) some of the Jamaica oranges fetched higher prices than any in the English market. It has been suggested that all produce of this kind should be inspected by a competent Government officer before shipment, and all inferior and badly packed fruit rejected. This practice is becoming generally adopted for agricultural produce both in the United States and in Australia. There is no doubt of its value in maintaining a high standard of quality ; and it has been found to be the only effective check in preventing loss and disappointment both to the shippers and consignees. There may be difficulties at

first in introducing such a system into Jamaica, but as its working elsewhere has stood the test of many years, its practicability and advantages cannot be doubted."

From bananas to other plants the transition is a natural one, and, as a matter of fact, it coincides with a frequent sequence in the order of cultivation. It is one of the greatest difficulties of those who take up land in tropical countries, with the exception of sugar-planters who harvest their canes in less than eighteen months, that unless they have ample capital, they find it hard to make both ends meet until they are able to reap the benefit of their expenditure. According to a trustworthy estimate, coffee does not yield any return for three years, a lime or orange tree for four, while cocoa requires five to six years, and nutmegs require eight. Even then the crop is at first small. To have reached a condition of full bearing, according to Mr. Gurney, of Grenada, cocoa trees must have been planted not less than nine years, and nutmegs five years longer. How then is the planter to live in the meanwhile? If he is in a country where bananas are marketable, let him also cultivate them on his land, as he will be able to sell his fruit within a year

and a half, and, according to Dr. Morris, its proceeds should suffice to maintain him until he begins to receive his permanent source of revenue. At the same time, the bananas will afford the requisite shade to the young cocoa or whatever other tree is growing in their midst.

We thus see how important it is that a service of fruit-ships should call at the islands which, in the opinion of the last Royal Commission, have insufficiently diversied their products; and we shall also realise that we must not expect the Imperial Department of Agriculture to wield a magician's wand. Later on I shall have more to say about its excellent work; at present I wish merely to point out that the process of regeneration must necessarily be slow.

The last sentence suggests to me that I must put myself right at once with my friends in Trinidad and Grenada by stating that it does not apply to them. In both these islands there is a most successful cultivation of cocoa. In Trinidad it has existed since the earliest days; in Grenada it was substituted for sugar before the fall in the price of the latter commodity had seriously crippled the planters.

I have insisted so much upon the importance

of bananas as a stepping-stone to more permanent products that it will be asked how these two islands have managed to do without them and yet to prosper. But, where the planters are men of means, they can afford to abide their time; and, in some cases, cocoa estates have been formed by uniting small areas established under what is known as the contract system. The owner, after the land has been cleared, hands it over to a contractor, who has its use free of rent for a stated period during which he grows for his own requirements maize, bananas, yams, or other ground provisions, while he undertakes on his side to plant the land with cocoa trees at the proper distance apart. At the conclusion of the time the owner resumes the land and pays 1s. for each cocoa tree. This is the rate in Trinidad; in Grenada it varies from 3d. to 6d. The system has worked fairly well, but beyond the fact that it may lead to endless complications, it is open to the objection that the contractor, unless constantly supervised, may shirk his obligations, or that, in the absence of a written agreement, which the tenant would probably not understand, the latter may be despoiled of his dues. In a few instances, I gather, gross injustice has been perpetrated, especially where

estates have changed hands. However that may be, the Legislature of Grenada in 1900 proved that it regarded its intervention as necessary by enacting an elaborate Tenants' Protection Ordinance. And it is of course more satisfactory if the owner, whether the property be large or small, can keep it throughout in his own hands.

An interesting point in connection with the destination of the cocoa is that the greater part of the output of Grenada and two-thirds of that of Trinidad, which has nearly doubled within the last fifteen years, goes to Europe, although no duty would be imposed upon it in the United States. From these facts I deduce the conclusion that, given fair competition, West Indian planters are able to hold their own in the markets of the world, and that the alleged economic trend of West Indian trade towards the United States has been exaggerated.

During recent years the grower has seen a welcome rise in the price of cocoa which should give him a large margin of profit if his land is not heavily encumbered. The average cost of production of fifteen estates in Trinidad as given to the last Royal Commission worked out at 36s. per bag of 165 lbs., and in July last Trinidad cocoa was selling at 65s. to 85s. according to quality.

In view of such an opportunity it is not to be wondered at that it is proposed to extend the cultivation of cocoa in other islands; but the liability to hurricanes must be reckoned with. Trinidad and British Guiana are outside the zone, and Grenada has been comparatively immune; but it will not soon be forgotten how, in 1898 and 1899, St. Vincent, Barbados, and Montserrat were successively devastated. Nor did Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, or Antigua remain unscathed. And in Jamaica, in the autumn of 1899 and the spring of the present year, severe tempests caused much injury to cultivation.

As regards the islands which were most sorely harassed, full descriptions of the loss of life and property are contained in the official reports which have been laid before Parliament. No purpose would be gained in quoting from them, as we may rest assured that our Government, by direct grants and loans for the reconstruction of sugar and other works, and the British people through the Lord Mayor of London, did all that was possible to alleviate the distress. The figures for one island will demonstrate this sufficiently: St. Vincent received a free grant of £25,000 from Imperial funds, a loan of £50,000, and more than £20,000 as its share of the public

subscriptions. It is true that a low estimate of the total loss sustained placed it at £225,000, but, as the Administrator wrote a year later, "this open-handed generosity not only did good by the expenditure within the Colony which it made possible, but brought home to the hearts of the sufferers that they were not being left to face the ordeal unaided, and that friendly eyes in all parts of the Empire were watching their efforts to emerge from the ruin inflicted by the cyclone."

We are more immediately concerned, however, with the position of the cultivator. His risk is in one respect greater, for the reasons already explained, if he is growing limes or cocoa than if he has canes which are reaped within eighteen months of having been planted; on the other hand, limes are shipped as they are plucked, and the preparation of cocoa is simple and inexpensive, while the sugar-planter may suffer irreparable loss in the destruction of his mill and machinery. In both Barbados and St. Vincent these were, if not annihilated, badly injured, while the growing canes were not irretrievably damaged; but the other crops in St. Vincent have on the whole fared better than was anticipated. As the fear of hurricanes, rare though they are, is believed to check the investment of money in the West

Indies, I will give another extract from the report from which my last quotation was taken:

"The damage to nutmeg trees is irretrievable, and it is doubtful, after their severe experience, whether cultivators will ever again be rash enough to attempt such a cultivation in this hurricane region. In regard to cocoa, however, the damage has proved to be comparatively partial, for even the fallen trees have in many cases recovered themselves, and where the injured ones have received careful attention directly after the storm there can be no doubt of their ultimate recovery. On estates where efficient windbreaks had been established this is more marked than in other cases; and where this precaution is taken in the future, it would seem that the risk of a hurricane, which after all is in these latitudes only an occasional visitor, may be faced as other risks are." Last January I met the Curator of the Botanic Station at St. Vincent who told me that anticipations as to the recovery of the cocoa have been realised.

Montserrat would seem to have been the greatest permanent sufferer. Next to sugar the principal industry was the production of lime juice in various forms by the Montserrat Company which had a large acreage under

cultivation. By the hurricane the orchards were laid flat and the lime trees were in many cases torn up by the roots. So great was the disaster that, as I gather, the Company has only gradually replaced the limes, and the negroes are the poorer by the consequent loss of wages.

But whereas the lime industry has sustained a severe blow in Montserrat, it is being pursued to an increasing extent in Dominica and elsewhere. Upon this point Dr. Morris remarks that it deserves to be extended within such limits as are imposed by the commercial demand for the produce. Several other West Indian articles can be placed in this category, notably arrowroot and nutmegs. The former is a staple industry of St. Vincent, and reached its zenith in 1892, when it was valued at more than £60,000. Since then the decline in price has been constant until it was sent up by the damage wrought to the crop by the hurricane of 1898. During this period the quality has admittedly deteriorated; but there can be little doubt that the demand is of so limited a character that the growth of arrowroot instead of canes upon a few estates was sufficient to cause over-production. For nutmegs the demand is still smaller, and the price has declined of late years. In the case of that other spice,

cloves, which from our childhood we have always connected with nutmegs, the market is already overstocked with supplies from the East Indies and Zanzibar; so that, in the West Indies, not only is there no cultivation of it, but the fruit is actually not gathered from the trees.

No such danger need be apprehended in the case of staple products such as sugar, coffee, cocoa, and, I might add, tobacco, if I am right in thinking that it could be grown as successfully in other islands as in Jamaica. Some of the cigars which I smoked in Jamaica were far superior to the average sixpenny "Havana" which one buys in London.

The prices, indeed, of most tropical products, with the exception of cocoa and the finest kinds of coffee and tobacco, have shown a distinct downward tendency of recent years, and I do not anticipate any considerable reaction. My readers would not thank me for a list of the countries from which Great Britain obtains, for example, its coffee, cocoa, and tea, and of the relative amount imported from each. Suffice it to say that, as there is an enormous extent of tropical land suitable for cultivation, and it is progressively being utilised, prices must fall for the same reason that the occupation of new lands

in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the Argentine Republic has brought down the price of wheat or of wool. It is true that many tropical districts, not only in Africa, but in Central and South America, are not under stable Governments, but cultivation in the latter countries is not impeded as much as might be expected. And our own countrymen, by building railways in the Argentine Republic, Brazil, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and other countries, have given an impetus to production. The newest South American undertaking of which I have heard is the construction, by an American Syndicate, of a railway from Guayaquil to Quito, the capital of Ecuador which is the largest exporter of cocoa in the world. Next, it may be interesting to add, comes St. Thomas, a Portuguese island off the west coast of Africa, and then Trinidad. And even from Hayti, where foreigners are forbidden to own land and the administration is of the worst description, 66,000,000 lbs. of coffee are exported annually.

We shall, then, conclude that the countries which can dispose of virgin soil and, at the same time, can assure orderly rule to the inhabitants, have most to look forward to in the immediate future. It is a matter of common knowledge

that British Guiana is a large Colony, about equal in size to the United Kingdom, of which the coastal fringe alone is occupied; but there is a general impression that the West Indian islands have been developed to the fullest extent. So far is this from being the case that many of them still have considerable tracts of Crown Lands. Taking a wider point of view, so as to include uncultivated land owned privately, Dr. Morris estimates the area of cultivable land not beneficially occupied at 2,345,000 acres. Towards this total Jamaica and Trinidad contribute 1,500,000 and 550,000 acres respectively. Barbados has but 10,000, the Leeward Islands 150,000, confined almost entirely to Dominica, and the Windward Islands 135,000, mainly in St. Vincent and St. Lucia.

Barbados, therefore, can be ignored for our present purpose, and so can Antigua, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Nevis, which are all very small. Dominica has hitherto been an arrant failure, which makes the Englishman feel rather ashamed of his countrymen. Here is one of the most fertile islands in the world, which has been more than a hundred years under our rule and lies midway between two productive French Colonies, Guadeloupe and Martinique, and yet is almost entirely

devoid of roads and has scarcely more than 30,000 inhabitants. Until recently they were emigrating to the gold-mines of Venezuela and Cayenne, and the total external trade in 1899 amounted to but £130,000 in value. Compare this with Grenada, an island of less than half the size but very similar in its cultural possibilities, which has 64,000 inhabitants and an external trade valued at £494,000. How is the difference to be explained? Owing to its physical configuration, Dominica, which at the beginning of last century had a flourishing trade in coffee, should never have pinned its faith upon sugar. The same is true of Grenada; but, whereas the latter basks in the prosperity of its cocoa, the former limps along with coffee, cocoa, and limes. I think a partial explanation is to be found in the fact that Grenada reverted sooner than Dominica to the direct rule of the Crown, while the larger island, owing to the indifference of the negro to the vote, was practically in the hands of a plantocracy, which, if it had opened up the local resources, would have gone against its own interests by increasing the demand for labour. But the future is of more immediate importance. Dominica has an energetic Administrator, who, when he was last in England advertised the advantages of the Colony to the

utmost; and the Imperial authorities have granted £15,000 for the construction of roads which will open up, among other districts, a portion of the centre of the island known as the Layou Flats. The term is somewhat of a misnomer, as the Flats are at an altitude of nearly 1,000 feet above the sea and are broken up into ravines and mountain slopes. They are said to be eminently adapted for the establishment of new products. Indeed, Mr. C. O. Naftel, formerly Inspector of Estates in Ceylon, who inquired into the agricultural capabilities of Dominica in 1897, wrote that, comparing Dominica with Ceylon, which is the leading Colony of the Empire in the matter of tropical agriculture, he could "confidently advise any one with capital (which he can afford to invest without requiring an immediate return) and with knowledge of planting, or with confidence in some person whose services he can secure to plant for him, to invest in Dominica." Mr. Naftel, I should note incidentally, joins issue with Dr. Morris by his strong opposition to the planting of bananas, yams, or other provisions while coffee or cocoa is maturing. This is a matter for experts, on which I can hold no opinion, but I do not see how the landholder is to get on without them unless he is a man of means. The question therefore arises

whether Agricultural Companies for which Dominica, in Mr. Naftel's view, offers a profitable field, should not be attracted by adequate inducements. We should all prefer individual settlement (and in temperate regions it should never be superseded); but in tropical countries I fear that we shall not see rapid results except through large combinations possessed of capital and able to command the services of experienced men. Some difficulty might be experienced in the matter of labour, especially if there were competing employers, as many of the peasants own their own holdings; but arrangements could be made for the introduction of coolies, and, if sugar does not take a turn for the better, immigrants might be attracted from Barbados, Antigua, or St. Kitts. Hitherto, though a few persons have taken up parcels of Crown Lands which are sold at the rate of 10s. an acre, the efforts of the Administrator have not met with the success which they deserved.

Proceeding down the chain of islands in a southerly direction, we should come to St. Lucia and St. Vincent. St. Lucia is almost as large as Dominica, and is also in a backward condition, not more than a fourth of the total area being beneficially occupied. At present, much of the

interior is quite inaccessible. There are, however, on the Leeward coast, several fertile valleys containing well-equipped sugar factories, and cocoa has been successfully grown for many years. The external trade is nearly three times as large as that of Dominica, and increased activity is resulting from the gradual removal to St. Lucia of the Imperial troops from Barbados. This change is being carried out because St. Lucia, in its capital, Castries, contains the finest harbour in the Lesser Antilles which is gradually becoming an important commercial as well as naval coaling station. When we were there barracks were being built upon various elevations overlooking the harbour, thus giving employment at good wages to the peasantry and enabling them if they are industrious to economise with a view to the purchase of land. And, as the presence of the troops will cause a large amount of money to be circulated and will increase the demand for local products, St. Lucia can look forward with confidence to making a steady upward progress. At the same time, similarly with Dominica, it offers favourable opportunities for the investment of capital by individuals or companies.

St. Vincent is one of the unlucky islands. We have already seen how severely it was struck by

a hurricane in 1898 and that one of its staple products, arrowroot, has a very limited commercial demand. We have now to note a burden which fell with particular weight upon the working classes: "There are thousands of acres of unused lands," said Dr. Morris in 1897, "attached to the present sugar estates, or abandoned estates themselves, that possess a rich soil, and are within easy reach of habitations and accessible by roads and paths already existing. Prominent instances are the three large estates just outside the capital of the island, formerly in sugar, but now practically abandoned and lying useless. The holders of these and similar lands at present refuse to sell, and in the present condition of the sugar market they are unable to cultivate them." It was estimated at that time that of the 42,000 acres in the hands of large proprietors, at most 10,000 were beneficially occupied. Under these circumstances the last Royal Commission had no hesitation in recommending that the Government of St. Vincent should be given power to purchase some of these lands compulsorily, and, as the Imperial Government provided a grant in aid, an ordinance giving effect to the proposal was passed through the local Legislature in 1898. The price, which was to be assessed by the Chief Justice, assisted,

at his discretion, by two competent and impartial persons appointed as valuers, was to be based upon the amount of purchase money paid by the last purchaser, diminished by the amount equal to the subsequent deterioration or increased by the amount of any subsequent existing improvement. The land thus acquired was to be appropriated to the use of establishing small holdings. Writing early in 1900, the Administrator reported that several estates had been purchased, and surveys commenced dividing them up into allotments of about five acres each for sale to settlers on a system of instalments extending over sixteen years. A year later the Curator of the Botanic Station told me that the scheme was progressing satisfactorily, that the land had been carefully laid out so as to equalise as far as possible the character of the soil, and that some of the applicants, natives of the island who had economised upon the South American goldfields, had paid for their holdings outright. It was as yet impossible to say what would be the permanent result, but his department was assisting the settlers by presenting them with plants. Until these lands which are within reach of the coast have been developed, there will be little scope for extending operations to the more remote Crown Lands.

Grenada need not detain us, except as regards its dependency, the island of Carriacou, and that not because it affords an outlet for capital, but because its inhabitants were in an analogous position to those of St. Vincent. To quote the Royal Commission again: "The land is in the hands of a few persons who have themselves abandoned cultivation, and who, by virtue of the monopoly they possess, are in a position to dictate their own terms to the cultivators." When I was in Grenada, the Attorney-General, who had been responsible for drafting the St. Vincent ordinance, was preparing a scheme of expropriation for Carriacou. He told me that the owners let the land in large blocks to persons who sublet it in smaller sections at an enhanced rate to the cultivator. Fortunately many of the leases are running out, and the authorities reckon that they can pay a fair price to the owners, let the land more cheaply to the cultivators, and at the same time get a sufficient return to cover the interest and sinking fund upon their outlay. It is noteworthy that neither in this case, nor in that of St. Vincent, is there any suggestion of compensation on account of the compulsory nature of the sale.

In regard to the internal resources of Trinidad I have not much to say at this point. References

have already been made to the progress of cane farming and cocoa, the benefits resulting from the pitch lakes, and the immunity from hurricanes; and when I come to treat of the system of government, it will be seen that I regard Trinidad as the most suitable capital for a large colony embracing many, if not all, of the West Indian islands. The enthusiastic forecasts which I then venture upon as to its future, combined with the large area of still available Crown Lands, may be held to justify the statement that I look upon Trinidad as the best field in the West Indies for the investment of British capital. Much depends upon the point of view of the investor. Some would be attracted by an almost undeveloped island like Dominica; others, who may propose to combine settlement with investment, by a Colony which is already far advanced, with greater opportunities of social intercourse, where the finances are in a flourishing condition and taxation is light. The drawback to Trinidad, as compared, not with Dominica, but with Jamaica, is the absence of good roads in the interior; but a large amount has recently been spent upon them out of current revenue and a portion of the last authorised loan of £200,000 is to be devoted to their improvement and extension. Under the

rule of the present energetic and capable Governor, Sir Alfred Moloney, there can be no fear that the rate of progress will become slower. During recent years the average annual alienations of Crown Lands have amounted to 6,800 acres; but in 1899 14,600 acres were disposed of, partly because the price of cocoa was high, partly because extensions of the Government railway had rendered new districts accessible to settlers.

Another drawback in Trinidad, which is shared, as far as I know, by all the British West Indian islands except Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Grenada, though in so disagreeable a form by Antigua alone, is the distance from the land at which ships are obliged to discharge their passengers and cargo on account of the shallowness of the harbour of Port-of-Spain. The matter has engaged serious attention for some years, and proposals have been made by a private company to construct a deep-water harbour at Chaguaramas, ten miles up the bay, which would be connected with Port-of-Spain by railway. But I understand that there is difficulty about raising the money, and appearances point rather to the adoption of the scheme of the Director of Public Works for deepening the present harbour. Mr. Wrightson, the official in question, believes that by the expenditure of half

a million sterling, or at most three-quarters, ships could be enabled to discharge alongside, and that as £30,000 is now spent annually, at the rate of 2s. 6d. per ton, upon incoming and outgoing cargo, the undertaking could not, taking the highest estimate of expenditure, place more than a small direct burden upon the community. Having noticed the muddy colour of the water, and remembering that some of the mouths of the Orinoco are in the Gulf of Paria, I inquired whether the channel would not be likely to silt up constantly, but Mr. Wrightson had convinced himself that this would not be the case. On account of the large transit trade with Venezuela, amounting to one-fifth of the total external trade of the Colony, the question gains an added importance. And this trade would grow immediately if the Venezuelan Government took off the extra duty of 30 per cent. which they levy upon imports from the West Indies. Of course they do not get half the money to which they are entitled. Smuggling is rife, the coast of the mainland being within sight of Trinidad, and the Venezuelan Custom House officials are not above the suspicion of accepting bribes. And, apart from this obstacle to legitimate trade, the condition of Venezuela is not conducive to peaceful progress.

At the time of writing, the President, not satisfied with an internal revolution, is seeking to fasten a quarrel upon Colombia. But, whatever may happen, Trinidad, which is on the direct route between the capital, Caracas, and the basin of the Orinoco which must become commercially the most important section of the Republic, is bound to be connected closely with its future. At present, an Anglo-American Company sailing under the Venezuelan flag maintains regular steam communication between Trinidad and Ciudad Bolivar, which is 260 miles from the mouth of the Orinoco and at the head of the tidal waters. From the latter point smaller vessels of the same Company ply upon the upper Orinoco and some of its tributaries. The total basin is estimated to have an area of 364,000 square miles, and there are said to be 1,450 miles of navigable waters.

For the whole of this vast tract of land the natural outlet is clearly through the mouths of the Orinoco in the neighbourhood of Trinidad. To the north, along the Venezuelan coast, is an almost uninterrupted range of high mountains, and the district is equally shut in on the south by obstructing heights. At a point some 750 miles from the sea, where the Meta joins the

Orinoco, each of these rivers, of which the former has flowed in an easterly direction, the latter northwards, has formed for several hundred miles the boundary between Venezuela and Colombia. Trinidad, therefore, is interested in the peaceful development of Colombia as well as of Venezuela, and this is confirmed in the last Consular report from Ciudad Bolivar, wherein it is said that "the transit trade with the neighbouring Republic of Colombia, *via* the Orinoco and Meta rivers, has been blocked during the greater part of the year in consequence of the revolution in that country." In 1900 the exports from Ciudad Bolivar amounted to no more than £400,000 in value, of which the principal items in order of importance were balata rubber, hides, gold bullion, heron feathers, and cattle. A paltry record, indeed, which does not go far to confirm my prognostications. But I know of no river of the size of the Orinoco which does not during its course pass through lands of great fertility; so I look for a brilliant future, though possibly distant, in which Trinidad will bear no mean a part. And, in the meanwhile, its own resources will rear a confident and progressive stock.

About Jamaica, equally with Trinidad, we have had a good deal to note already. We

have seen how dependent it has become upon the American market. We have also considered the attempt that is being made to ship Jamaican fruit to England, and we shall be much engaged with Jamaica in the chapter dealing with the systems of government. At present we need only remember that Jamaica is the largest of the British West Indian islands, having more than twice the area of Trinidad, which is next to it in size, and that it has a corresponding variety in its resources. Their recent progress or retrogression may be traced from an interesting table in the last report from Jamaica. Among the ten leading exports the value of cocoa, which is still less than one-twelfth of that of Trinidad, is more than four times that of ten years ago; that of ginger, pimento, and cocoa-nuts has trebled, that of bananas and oranges has doubled in the last decade. On the other hand, there has been a fall, greater or smaller, both in the price and in the value of the exports of sugar, rum, logwood, and coffee. I mention these facts in exemplification of my statement that sugar and rum are not alone in being subject to fluctuations in price, and that mostly in a downward direction. Cocoa, it is true, has shown a considerable upward tendency, but it is the one marked exception, and

even it is not quite so remunerative as a year or so ago. The essentially speculative character of tropical agriculture is thus emphasised. It may be that there is no greater stability in price in the case of wheat or maize; but the cultivator in temperate regions who reaps annual crops does not give the same hostages to fortune as he who, when he looks to gain the long-awaited fruit of his labours, may find his calculations upset by causes over which he has no control. To this extent the grower of canes or bananas is in a more favourable position.

Nearly one-half of the estimated area of cultivable land in Jamaica is at an elevation of above 1,000 feet, and a great deal of it is much higher. In this respect, though altitudes of several thousand feet are attained in other islands, Jamaica gives the greatest scope for permanent cultivation and settlement by Europeans. At Mandeville, which is 2,200 feet above the sea and is the centre of a district producing oranges, coffee, and pimento, I saw white children looking as rosy and happy as possible, and those who live in the lowlands can send their children to school in the mountains. In connection with the unfortunate contract of 1889 for the extension of the railway the West India Improvement

Company became entitled to more than 75,000 acres of land, of which it makes no use whatever. Presumably it would be willing to dispose of its property upon suitable terms, and there are also nearly 100,000 acres of Crown Lands, mostly ranging in altitude from 2,000 to 6,000 feet, which can be taken up upon easy conditions of payment.

If, however, there were any immediate probability of the cultivation of all the land in private hands and of the rapid absorption of the Crown Lands, which is extremely unlikely, as, though the financial conditions are improving, they are not yet such as to tempt the investment of capital, it would be necessary for the Government to prevent undue denudation of the forests. A few words on this subject will come in aptly here, as we have concluded our survey of the islands, and the problem cannot arise for many years in British Guiana.

In his general study of the capabilities of the islands Dr. Morris frequently draws attention to the indiscriminate deforesting of the uplands. In St. Kitts, for instance, it appeared that the occurrence of destructive floods was every year becoming more marked. This was due, in a large measure, to the felling of timber,

which had been carried on to an alarming extent. As regards Dominica also, Mr. Naftel, whose report has already been quoted, felt bound to utter a serious warning: "It is almost a certainty that on an island like this, rising abruptly from the sea" (as do most of the other islands) "the immediate result of the clearing of a large area of forest land would be very largely to reduce the rainfall of the district cleared, for the rain-clouds, rising from the sea, would pass across it, and would not deposit their moisture until they reached the cooler forest-clad hills beyond." In Dominica, of course, precautions can still be taken by reserving certain tracts of forest throughout the island, and this is exactly what it is proposed to do in Trinidad. The Government of this Colony, so far as I know, has been the first to realise the urgency of the matter and to call in the assistance of an expert in forestry. The object to be arrived at being the protection of water supply and the attraction of rain-clouds, he proposes that 293 square miles or 16·74 per cent. of the land should be set aside for this purpose, and makes many detailed recommendations which need not be enumerated. If they are all carried out, on the one hand cultivators will have no cause to fear injurious changes in

the climate; on the other, a great diminution will have been made in the area hitherto regarded as available for occupation. But, though similar withdrawals must be equally imperative elsewhere, there is no need to qualify the statement which I made a few pages back that many of the West Indian Colonies can dispose of fertile virgin soil which, combined with the strength and stability of the administration, should attract the British investor or emigrant, provided that the latter is not altogether without capital.

Finally, as to British Guiana, singularly little is known about the interior considering that it has been a British Colony for eighty-five years. Good results are expected from the geological survey which has been carried on during the last few years; but it must not be anticipated that gold-mining, if successfully extended, will have the same effect as, for instance, in Victoria. In that case the advent of miners supplied a natural market for agriculturists, who, following in their wake, placed the country upon a basis of permanent prosperity. In British Guiana the miners are, and will continue for the most part to be, negroes whose wants are supplied by the growth of a few patches of ground provisions. No staple products, unless it be rice—and that

can obviously be cultivated only upon the coast—will be consumed in the Colony to such an extent as to repay the producer. As, therefore, it will be impossible, by the operation of the tariff, to protect new industries until they have become securely established, the question arises whether the best interests of the Colony would not be subserved by offering large concessions of land, at a nominal price, to companies which will agree to spend large sums of money upon their development. I may add that Sir Cavendish Boyle, who was Government Secretary of British Guiana at the time of my visit, expressed himself to me as strongly in favour of this policy. And the physical conditions of the Colony afford a strong argument in its favour. At first sight it would seem that, with the splendid series of waterways, access to the interior should be easy. Unfortunately, the three principal rivers, the Demerara, the Essequibo, and the Berbice, are blocked by cataracts at a distance from the sea of 90, 35, and 150 miles respectively. And little has been done to overcome these obstacles. There are but two railways in the Colony: the one runs roughly eastward and westward from Georgetown, in directions parallel with the coast; the other connects the Demerara river with the

Essequibo at a point above the lower falls of the latter. This short line of eighteen miles simplifies the journey for miners who are proceeding to the gold-mining districts near the Potaro and other tributaries of the Essequibo. Further, there are a few roads in the interior whose exact position need not be specified, all of which are intended to facilitate the movements of miners. Beyond these somewhat elementary undertakings productive companies would have to construct their own means of communication. What, then, would be their prospects? The coastal fringe, as we have seen, contains all the sugar estates; it is interspersed with villages around which negroes grow their ground provisions and East Indians are making headway with rice. The capabilities of the adjacent territory may be described by extracts from a recent report of Professor Harrison, the Government Analyst: "The work of examining into the nature and composition of the soils of the more accessible parts of the interior of the Colony has been actively pursued. As far as the examination has been conducted no evidence has been obtained of the existence of soils of marked fertility in the lower parts of the upper reaches of the rivers. The majority of the soils

examined are unfit for the cultivation of economic products. . . . In marked contrast to the results of the examination of the soils of the upper reaches of the rivers are those of the alluvial soils of the lower reaches. Between the true coast lands and the ranges of sand dunes which occur in Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo at varying distances from the mouths of the rivers are great tracts of land of marked potential fertility, and it is to these, if the difficulties of drainage can be easily overcome, that the attention of cultivators of products other than sugar should be directed." I should not suggest that these latter lands, so far as they belong to the Crown, should be offered in large concessions, as they are within the reach of the individual selector. And, by the amendments made in the Crown Lands Regulations, these can now be purchased at the rate of fifteen cents per acre, and the incidental expenses connected with acquiring the title have been much reduced. Special opportunities are also offered for the acquisition of small plots of land as homesteads at little cost; but the land reverts to the Crown in the absence of beneficial occupation. The establishment of a thriving peasant proprietary is the obvious intention of these provisions, and

grants of land comprising 10,925 acres were made in 1899, as compared with 5,765 in the previous year.

The district immediately at the back of the coastal fringe contains, in addition to the recent alienations, such coffee and cocoa estates as exist in the Colony; but they are neither numerous nor important. Coffee is not yet exported, and cocoa only to a trifling amount. So there would seem, if the land is as fertile as it is represented to be, to be a large margin for profitable expansion.

To return to the unexploited interior. It consists, as far as it has been explored, of mountainous tracts covered with potentially valuable timber, and undulating savannas or plains on the borders of Venezuela and Brazil. These characteristics suggest the most suitable industries. The timber, I am told, cannot be floated down to the sea, on account both of the cataracts and of its specific gravity. Hence it must be dealt with on a large scale by wealthy capitalists who may realise, as Dr. Morris puts it, that "the Guiana forests are the most valuable of any in the West Indian Colonies, and that if suitable means of reaching them could be devised, and the cutting were carried on under proper regulations, they would be capable of supplying valuable timber,

such as greenheart and others, to meet almost any reasonable demand." The savannas, on the other hand, according to Sir Cavendish Boyle, could support countless herds of cattle. They could best be reached, he told me, by a railway starting at the confluence of the Mazaruni and Essequibo rivers (hence below the lowest falls of the latter) which should be built in a southerly direction towards the Brazilian frontier. In order to attract capitalists he would give liberal grants of land upon both sides of the line which, as I understood, should not present any great engineering difficulties. It would pass through mineralised land to the savannas, and at its terminus would be able to tap some of the Brazilian cattle trade. It would be absurd for one who spent so short a time in British Guiana, and can speak by experience only of the coastal regions, to attempt any forecast of the prospects of such a railway; but it is not presumptuous to point to the anomaly that British Guiana should have been ignored while ample funds have been found for the development, not only of Rhodesia, where gold is the talisman, but of Nyassaland, the Malay States, and North Borneo. In the three latter, at least, the climatic conditions are no better than in British Guiana. And the prospects of gold in

this Colony could legitimately be mentioned if subscriptions were invited for a great industrial undertaking.

Finally, while the Englishman in the West Indies is inclined to despise his countrymen for their selfish policy in the matter of sugar, he also begins to wonder, when he sees their prolonged failure to develop the resources of British Guiana and Dominica, what has become of their vaunted qualities of activity and enterprise.

# CHAPTER III

## THE NEGRO AND THE EAST INDIAN

THE position of the negro in the West Indies and Mauritius is different from that of all other subordinate races in the British Empire. The nearest analogy is that of the East Indian coolies, but whereas the latter have migrated voluntarily, though possibly upon the pressure of destitution, under a contract which fetters their liberty of action for five years, the former are descendants of persons forcibly carried away from their native land and reduced to slavery. The position of the Chinese is entirely distinct. With the exception of the few who have migrated under indenture, we find them either scanty in number, as in Australia and Canada, or, if they are numerically strong, as in the Straits Settlements and the Malay Peninsula, more than able to hold their own against the native race. So

forceful, indeed, is the character of the Chinese that where they are under a weak national Government, as in Siam, they are rather oppressors than oppressed. Passing from immigrants to native races under our sway, we can ignore the Australian aborigines, who are gradually becoming extinct. The Maoris of New Zealand, the dwindling in whose numbers has happily been arrested, have been secured in the possession of the greater portion of their lands. In the Federated Malay States, in British North Borneo, and in Fiji, the native chiefs act as agents of the Administration. Finally, in all the British possessions in Africa the government of the negroes is facilitated by the persistence of the tribal system and of traditional customs. In the West Indies and Mauritius alone, the negroes have no heritage in the land, they have no tribal system, and they recognise no superiority within their own ranks except so far as there still prevails a superstitious reverence for those believed to be possessed of supernatural power. With the spread of education the relics of Obeahism, which is constantly cropping up in unexpected ways, will be stamped out. In any case, here is nothing that makes for progress, and we must conclude that in the case of the West

Indian negro all the factors are lacking which, if skilfully utilised by the Government, may be made to subserve the advancement of the negro in Africa. In the West Indies the links with the past have been snapped too effectually to admit of the application of the principles of administration which are being pursued so successfully in Basutoland.

I do not think this point is sufficiently noted. For instance, Mr. Alleyne Ireland, in his interesting work, "Tropical Colonisation," says that "if the highest object is to make a country tranquil and prosperous, then the Dutch have governed better than any European nation which has undertaken the management of tropical dependencies." I entirely deny that the rulers of India have any reason to cede the first place to the Dutch, and, where we have come in contact with the Malay races, who are nearly akin to the Javanese, we are able to show an equally satisfactory record. Taking a comparatively recent extension of British influence in the tropics, a most marked degree of success has attended our efforts in the Federated Malay States, where, somewhat as the Dutch in Java, British officials govern indirectly through the native rulers.

Another qualification must be made: the task

of the dominant race is easier when its subjects are Mohammedans descended from generations of adherents to that faith than when, though they have embraced Christianity, they have a not very remote ancestry of rude savages. It is even asserted that the rigid monogamy enjoined by the Christian faith is a dangerously high ideal to set before the semi-civilised.

The problem of the West Indian negro, therefore, merits separate treatment by Colonial students, but it is, of course, closely allied with that which confronts Americans in their Southern States. Hence, any one who proposes to approach this subject, in however unambitious a fashion, would be better qualified for his task if he had travelled in the Southern States and were familiar with what has been written in regard to the American negro. Unfortunately, I cannot claim to have studied the negro both in the United States and in the West Indies; but I should say that, of the two, it is more instructive to see him in the West Indies owing to the longer time which has there elapsed since his emancipation. The modifying influences of civil freedom must be more manifest in proportion to the length of time during which it has been enjoyed. And not only so: whereas, in the United States, shortly

before emancipation, the slaves were eight times as numerous as the free coloured and black inhabitants, in Trinidad, at least, whatever may have been the case in the other West Indian Colonies, for which I have been unable to obtain any information, the Act of Emancipation affected a coloured and black population numbering 16,334 free men as compared with not more than 20,332 slaves.

Those who are anxious to obtain a picture of what slavery actually was in the British Colonies at the end of the eighteenth century will be repaid by a perusal of Bryan Edwards' fascinating "History of the West Indies." I should have been tempted, if Mr. Alleyne Ireland had not forestalled me, to transcribe his account of the daily life of the slaves; but it may be of interest to see what he has to say in regard to their character. After noting that the condition of slavery soon blotted out distinctions between the different races of negroes, he proceeds to remark that:

"The negroes in general in our islands (such of them, at least, as have been any length of time in a state of servitude) are of a distrustful and cowardly disposition. So degrading is the nature of slavery, that fortitude of mind is lost as free

agency is restrained. To the same cause probably must be imputed their propensity to violate or conceal the truth; which is so general that I think the vice of falsehood is one of the most prominent features in their character. . . . The proneness observable in many of them to the vice of theft has already been noticed; and I am afraid that evil communication makes it almost general."

Among the negroes themselves there was a kindly spirit of companionship, especially between those who had been brought in the same ship from Africa. But it was fatal to place one negro in authority over another: he would use his power with extreme harshness. And similar brutality was displayed towards the animal creation. In this respect, at least, there has been considerable improvement. I noticed no cases of cruelty to beasts of burden but was surprised to read in the newspapers several instances of charges of that description brought in the magistrates' courts.

One very pleasing trait, however, struck Mr. Edwards forcibly: the high veneration in which old age was held by the negro. Nor was the regard thus displayed towards the aged confined to outward ceremonies and terms of respect. "The whole body of negroes," he says, "must

be reduced to a deplorable state of wretchedness if, at any time, they suffer their aged companions to want the common necessaries of life, or even many of its comforts, as far as they can procure them."

Here I fear that the same high standard has not been maintained, though I hesitate to give a decided opinion after so short a visit. I base my impression, partly, upon the existence of poor-houses for the aged, which should be unnecessary, except for a few chronic invalids, in the tropics, where the younger generation could provide for them without difficulty ; partly, upon the fact that, in the report of a Commission which had enquired into the notorious prevalence of juvenile depravity in Jamaica, a great point was made of the insufficient control which parents were able or willing to exercise over their children. And this would surely be incompatible with the continuance of the former relations between the old and the young.

As to the general treatment of the slaves at the period at which he writes, Mr. Edwards, who had spent eighteen years in the West Indies, gives a most interesting description in the fifth chapter of his second volume. It appears that, upon the arrival of a cargo from Africa, every

care was taken not to separate the members of a family; and they would be kept together unless under an iniquitous Imperial Statute they were sold in satisfaction of the debts of their owner. The slaves were usually given, especially in Jamaica, where land was abundant, an ample provision ground on which to grow food for their sustenance; they were allowed one day a fortnight, besides Sundays and holidays; they were regularly visited by medical attendants; and, on the whole, they were not harshly handled. In Jamaica, Grenada, and Dominica, especially, the Legislatures sought to soften the rigours of slavery; and, while instances of cruelty were rare, offenders were punished with severe fines and imprisonment. A list of actual sentences is appended.

And in British Guiana, which was still in the hands of the Dutch when Edwards wrote his book, I gather from Mr. Ireland that the slave law, after the English occupation, specified the minimum amount of clothing which must be allowed to slaves, provided that they must either receive a certain supply of food or land and implements of husbandry, prescribed holidays, insisted upon a record of all punishments, and contained a series of minute regulations which

the slave-owner was obliged to observe. They were enforced by the Protector of Slaves, who was empowered to visit any estate without warning and had free access to the slaves at all times.

As regards food, lodging, and medical assistance, concludes Mr. Bryan Edwards, the slaves in the British West Indies might be deemed objects of envy to half the peasantry of Europe. And in the years immediately preceding emancipation, the liberty allowed on holidays and the complete enjoyment assured to them in the produce of their small holdings prepared them to some extent for a life of freedom.

Even so, the transition, when it came, was bound to be painful, both to the owner and the slave, although the Act of Emancipation interposed a term of apprenticeship between slavery and complete liberty, during which it was hoped that the negroes would acquire the habit of working regularly for wages. This intermediate stage, which was to have lasted for six years, did not prove satisfactory and was subsequently curtailed. It was probably foredoomed to failure, though founded upon the best intentions. The master would resent the curtailment of his rights; the negro, whose anticipations had been raised

to the highest pitch, the control to which he was still subjected.

In Antigua alone the masters voluntarily rejected the proposed apprenticeship and liberated their slaves outright. They seem thereby to have established a pleasant relationship between the two classes which has subsisted to the present day. I do not want to make more of this point than it is worth, but I had been struck, before I had become aware of this fact, by the language used by the planters of Antigua in regard to the negroes. They had plenty to say about their difficulties, upon which I have expatiated in an earlier chapter, but they did not suggest, as is the wont of the planters in some of the islands, that they were aggravated by the untrustworthiness and laziness of the labourers. I do not mean to say that, where such complaints are made, they are without justification; but I am glad to be able to chronicle an instance of cordial co-operation between the races.

In Antigua, Barbados, and partially in St. Kitts, emancipation could not have such disturbing consequences as elsewhere. The negroes had no resource but to continue to work for their former masters, as there were no vacant

lands which they could occupy and no other methods by which they could procure subsistence. Besides, these islands were so densely peopled that the supply of labourers was ample. Here, therefore, the upheaval was but little felt.

But throughout the rest of the West Indies the conditions were very different. The population was not dense, and there was much unoccupied soil. Thus, on the one hand, the staple industry was sugar, in which the results depend largely upon the constant attention paid to the canes; on the other, the natural tendency of the freedmen to whom slavery had meant the obligation to work upon the estates, was to withdraw from such work on account of the associations which it embraced. The inevitable result followed: many of the negroes migrated to the Crown Lands, upon which they led a precarious and retrograde existence, and where, owing to the inaccessibility of their locations, they were undisturbed for many years by the Authorities. Gradually, however, there has been a survey of the lands and a determination of the rights of ownership; but, as an exemplification of the slow character of the process, it may be mentioned that the Administrator of St. Lucia

reported in 1898 that progress was being made with the detection of squatters. These are, of course, not solely the descendants of those who squatted at the time of emancipation; the attractions of such a mode of life must continue to operate as long as it cannot effectually be prevented. But there can be no doubt of its demoralising influence. If it be true that white men at the outskirts of civilisation tend to degenerate, how much more must this be so in the case of the uneducated negro. The effect will be equally injurious if all the Crown Lands are simultaneously opened for settlement. It should be confined to the districts immediately adjoining the schoolmaster, the parson, and the doctor.

To return to the troubled planter whose supply of labour, it must be remembered, had been limited by the abolition of the slave-trade twenty-six years before the emancipation of the slaves. For the workmen who remained in the neighbourhood of the estates there at once arose a great competition among the planters, which sent up wages to a high level. Temporarily, according to Merivale, who wrote at this time, their increased expenditure gave an air of activity to all those branches of commerce

which contributed to supply their wants. But, as he sagely remarks, "unless the profuse expenditure of capital among them, in the form of wages, be continued—that is, in other words, unless the production of staple articles of export be maintained—all these acquired tastes will die away, from the utter impossibility of gratifying them. Each negro will be able to support himself in tolerable comfort; but, without the aid of capital, he cannot produce surplus wealth; without it, therefore, he must remain a stranger both to the wants and refinements of civilisation."[1] This important fact is often forgotten by those who think that the West Indies could advance in the hands of the blacks alone, who, they say, are the natural inhabitants of the tropics.

Merivale not only diagnosed the situation correctly, anticipating that the planters would not be able to continue to pay wages on so lavish a scale, but he suggested the introduction of labourers from other countries, which has been the remedy adopted in British Guiana and Trinidad.

Whereas, however, he looked to the United States to supply the requirement, most of the immigrants, as is well known, have been drawn

[1] "Colonisation and Colonies," edition of 1861, p. 320.

from India under indenture. The special circumstances attaching to this system must receive our notice, but it will be more convenient at present to trace the experiences of the negroes since emancipation.

In my remarks upon their present position and outlook, I have not hesitated to make use of Mr. W. P. Livingstone's recently published book, "Black Jamaica."[1] The author spent ten years in the Colony and, as he edited the leading daily newspaper, had unrivalled opportunities for forming suggestive impressions. He treats his subject in the most sympathetic spirit and arrives at frankly optimistic conclusions. If I am compelled to regard some of these as unwarranted, it is not, I hope, from any failure to realise that the white critic must be careful not to judge the negro by too high a standard. I still think that I am not unduly harsh in this respect; but as I shall be including what I said in the paper which I read last June before the Fellows of the Royal Colonial Institute, it is only fair to add that the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* of British Guiana has taken me to task as follows:

"While not denying the accuracy of the

[1] Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1899.

statistics he advances, we are inclined to think that he has not taken sufficiently into consideration, or made sufficient allowance for the effect and demoralising influence of the tropical climate, or the fact that it is but sixty years since the negro was freed from the terrible bonds of slavery. . . . Regarding the moral aspect, Mr. Walker brings European ideas and European conceptions of morality to bear in a sweeping manner that robs his arguments of much of their force."

These considerations should undoubtedly be borne in mind, but I think too much may be made of the shortness of the time that has elapsed since emancipation. It is not as if during these sixty odd years the negroes had been left to their own devices. They have been throughout under the influence of a higher civilisation. But if the rate of progress has been disappointingly slow, let us not blame the negroes, but consider whether our own methods may not have been faulty. During the earlier part of this period, when our statesmen at home were engaged principally in freeing trade, removing religious disabilities, and withdrawing the restrictions that fettered the working classes, when, in a word, *laisser faire* was in the

ascendant, it was doubtless thought that complete liberty of action was the greatest boon that could be conferred upon the negro as upon the white man. Latterly a more intelligent policy has been pursued, based upon the understanding that, whereas civil liberty must be assured to the negro, he requires a government of a paternal character. In the following chapter, under my references to the general increase in expenditure, I have mentioned some of the extensions of governmental action.

The comments of my friend in British Guiana, who, by the bye, is a Scotsman, were doubtless called forth by what I wrote in regard to the prevalence of predial larceny, the theft of growing crops, and the preponderance of illegitimate births. Nobody could reasonably expect the percentage of the latter to compare favourably with that in England, but it is most discouraging to learn from the Registrar's return for Jamaica that it has steadily increased each year since 1891. In 1899, 63·7 per cent. of the births were illegitimate, and the percentage of mortality among the illegitimate infants under the age of one year was half as large again as among the legitimate. In the census for 1891, the Registrar of Trinidad, approaching the question from

another side, found that, of the total adult population, exclusive of East Indians and their descendants, not more than 36 per cent. were scheduled as married or widowed. "The confirmation of the prevalence of concubinage," he adds, "is thus based, not on any assumption, however warrantable, but on the written testimony of the people themselves." Turn where we will, to the Leeward Islands, to the Windward Islands, or to Barbados, the same figures are presented to us, differing only in the degree of their badness. I can find no clue to the variations either in the density of the population or the ownership of land. Jamaica, for instance, is worse than Barbados, while Nevis, with its peasant proprietors and relatively smaller population, is in a more healthy condition than Antigua.

What, then, are the excuses made by apologists like Mr. Livingstone? He points to the fact that permanent alliances are contracted outside of matrimony. If faithfulness to one another, and not the ceremony of marriage, could be the test, a very different result would be shown. Nor does illegitimacy imply the degradation of the woman; on the contrary, it is she, in many cases, who objects to an indissoluble union. Poverty, again, is put forward as a deterrent from matri-

mony. The negro, being essentially an imitative creature, sees the display made by white people at their marriages and comes to regard a certain amount of show as a necessary concomitant of the ceremony. But this argument has the distinct flaw that, whereas in Jamaica the figures for each year of the last decade were worse than those of the one before, the middle years were undoubtedly times of greater prosperity than those which preceded them. My own researches lead me to add other explanations. The negroes, themselves but two generations from slavery and impatient of all trammels, are neither willing nor able to control their children. Further, the houses are of the most miserable description, as will be seen from the report upon the census of Jamaica in 1891.

"The generic term House is here applied to dwellings which, in many instances, are of such rude formation that it is almost doubtful whether the dignity of the title is properly extended to them. A few rudely cut posts stuck in the ground, wattled walls, roughly plastered with mud, and slight sticks or poles for rafters, form the framework of the structure, while the roof is of grass thatch and the floors of bare earth; such are the habitations of some 50,000 families

in Jamaica at this day, in this respect scarcely a step from the home surroundings of the barbaric age. Signs of a better condition, however, are to be seen, for in travelling round the island, to make preparatory arrangements for the census, one could not fail to be struck by the number of new houses and especially by the improved character of the structures erected for dwellings, and as shops or stores. This was observable in the interior parts, but mainly on the coast lines of route, where various fruit trade depôts have of late been established. The demand for bananas, the utilisation of much hitherto unproductive land, the consequent introduction of capital, the example in methodical enterprise and in the construction of neat buildings, set by those principally occupied in running the fruit trade, are the main factors in creating this better domiciliation."

As Jamaica has decided, from motives of economy, to omit the customary decennial census, we shall have no data as to any general improvement. But, as far as I could judge, when driving round the Port Antonio district, which is one of the best in the island, there are still very many of these wretched shanties. Of course a bad dwelling in Jamaica is less intolerable than

one in England. Most of the day, except in the rainy season, is spent in the open air, and the cooking stove at the door suggests *al-fresco* meals; but the evils of overcrowding at night are probably greater, given the passionate nature of the negro and his lack of self-control. Every friend of the negro with whom I talked emphasised his principal want as being that of character, and aimed at raising his standard of life in order that he might have an inducement to continuous application. He shows, it is true, an increasing desire to appear in good clothes upon Sundays and holidays, but it is difficult to see what further aspirations are likely to afford the necessary incentive. We must trust to the civilising influences of the Church and the school.

Their most potent efforts should also be directed towards destroying the deplorable inclination of the negro to predial larceny, the theft of growing crops. This crime is engaging the attention of the community more than at any previous time, but it would be impossible to say whether it is correspondingly more prevalent. Statistics as to the number of convictions are clearly valueless. We cannot gauge the ability or the willingness of the police to apprehend, nor can we know the extent to which the

sufferers prefer to take the law into their own hands, to prosecute or to submit to being robbed. Some of the planters are good-humouredly tolerant. It may happen, they say, as with the grape-fruit, that at one time a product has no exportable value, and the negroes are allowed to take as much as they please; later on, for the same thing, they are clapped into prison. When I was at Mandeville, in the highlands of Jamaica, a planter told me that, though he had hundreds of orange trees, it did not pay him to gather the oranges, as the American duty, combined with the charges of transportation, left no margin of profit. The negro sees the fruit rotting upon the ground: can we blame him very much if he helps himself? He regards the products of the earth much as the English labourer regards a hare or a partridge. But, unfortunately, the predial thief does not confine himself to what is of no value to its owner: he is the bane of the small proprietor, who often throws up his holding in sheer despair because he is despoiled of the greater portion of his crops. Nor can large owners be expected to look upon systematic robbery with equanimity. Remedial legislation has naturally been enacted in various Colonies. Imprisonment,

by itself, is admittedly of no avail; the negro rather likes it than otherwise, as he is better fed than at home and enforced inactivity is no punishment. Compulsory road-making without remuneration would be better, but some people do not like to see prisoners employed upon public works. There is a still stronger objection to flogging, which is intensely dreaded by the negroes, but I am informed that predial larceny was practically stamped out by it in Trinidad. The Legislative Council passed an ordinance giving magistrates no option but to order confirmed offenders to be flogged. The Secretary of State, however, insisted upon the insertion of a clause that the sentence was to be subject to confirmation by the Governor. The then representative of the Crown gave his consent in every case, with the result indicated, but his successor as persistently withheld it. On the other hand, I was told that in Grenada the fear of a flogging caused negroes, instead of stealing themselves, to make thieves of their women and children.

Another remedy, recently adopted in St. Lucia, consists not only in licensing buyers of agricultural produce and prescribing a full record of all transactions, but also in limiting the

persons from whom they may buy to such as being cultivators, have been authorised by the Government to dispose of their produce. If these provisions can be enforced, they may do some good, but they will not interfere with the landowner who sells his neighbour's produce with his own or the man who steals for his own gratification. The whole matter is so serious that I should be glad if His Majesty's Government would send to the West Indies a Commissioner who should investigate the attempts made to alleviate the evil and suggest the best method for coping with it. The difficulty should not be insoluble, as the negro is not an instinctive thief: while he pilfers small articles he rarely touches money or jewellery. But, whatever be proposed, it will not do to forget that the crime is fostered by the facility with which it can be committed. It is the easiest thing in the world, in the absence of walls and hedges, for a man to go upon an estate of two or three hundred acres of cocoa and steal a few pods. If, then, the risk of detection cannot be increased (and I do not see how that is to be done), probably the best course is to make the disposal of the stolen produce as difficult as possible. In that case, the experiment which

is being tried in St. Lucia, even though it cannot cover the whole of the ground, may be the precursor of similar legislation elsewhere.

While I am on the subject of unsatisfactory symptoms, I must mention that there has been a good deal of trouble lately in Barbados, though not, as far as I know, elsewhere, from repeated incendiarism among the canes. The *Barbados Advocate*, when I was in the Colony, was blaming the Executive for not having acted with greater firmness. "If a searching examination," it said, "was made into the origin of every cane fire, it seems incredible, looking to the number which has occurred within the last few seasons, that in no single case would an arrest have been made." Some unknown cause of dissatisfaction must clearly be at work which prompts acts of revenge against the planters. A committee of the Legislature has, I believe, since probed into the matter, but I have not seen the result of its inquiry. In any case, this is but an isolated phenomenon, and the Barbadian negro is not famed for his docility. But he has one attractive trait in his character, his intense love of his little home, which he shares with all other sections of the community. Hence, although the competition among the labourers is acute, and official

publications repeat that the abundant population must somehow find an outlet, it is difficult to get him to emigrate, although Dominica and other Colonies are crying out for more inhabitants. "He is of a different nature to other islanders in the West Indies," says the Colonial Secretary, in the course of some observations which tend to explain the Barbadian negro's attachment to his country. "His hard struggle for his daily bread, his every-day life among more or less of a crowd, where the weakest goes to the wall, have unsuited him for the purely agricultural life which would be his if he migrated to an allotment in another island where land is a drug and population is needed. He is, as a rule, fairly educated. He is not of the sort who is content to sit half-clothed under the shade of a banana leaf, satisfied if only he can pluck the bare needs of life from the few trees and plants around him. He wants a good house, plenty of neighbours, a bustling life, and, as far as he can, he gets it, though his wages be small. But his nature is opposed to isolation, and nothing but hard necessity will make him become a purely agricultural settler elsewhere." The conditions in Barbados are sufficiently different from those existing elsewhere in the West Indies to justify

a special note upon the negroes of that island. But I do not wish to suggest that they are generally intractable; possibly, however, they would be the better for the firmer control exercised in a Crown Colony.

I am now glad to have concluded such disparaging criticisms as seemed to be called for. Upon the liquor question I do not feel qualified to speak. What I noticed is in keeping with observations made in other countries and among other races, namely, that there is more drunkenness in the towns than in the rural districts, and that holidays offer the occasion for unwonted outbursts. But I do not think the negroes in the West Indies are habitually intemperate.

In their daily lives they are justly famed for their orderliness and respect for the law, which I attribute to their confidence in the constituted authority. In recent years there have, as far as I know, been no serious disturbances of the peace outside Dominica, St. Kitts, and Montserrat. The trouble in Dominica was connected with the payment of direct taxation; in St. Kitts with an attempted reduction of wages at a time of acute depression; in Montserrat with interference with illicit stills. In all three cases order was speedily restored. Further, it is most satis-

factory to find negroes and coloured men filling, with the confidence of their chiefs, responsible positions in the Civil Service and in business. A few men, of course, have done exceptionally well. There is the Chief Justice of Barbados, who is so often quoted in this context. And the coloured Solicitor-General of Trinidad, a man universally respected, is one of the most intelligent and agreeable men whom I have ever met. In the United States, Mr. Booker T. Washington, if I may digress a moment, is a conspicuous example of what may be achieved by the son of a slave. Of his own initiative, he has built up for the members of his race the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which has now 1,100 students and 28 industrial departments. From the whole tenour of the record of his life,[1] from which I have taken these figures, it is clear that he would prize more highly a general advance than a few brilliant successes. And I am equally convinced that he would wish the observer of the negro in the West Indies to state impartially what he believes to be the truth, even though some of the statements are uncomplimentary. Even Mr. Washington, hopeful as he is in regard to the future of his race, feels

[1] "Up from Slavery" (T. Fisher Unwin), pp. 311, 312.

constrained to admit "certain superficial and temporary signs which might lead one to a contrary opinion."

Let us now proceed with the enumeration of the hopeful signs in the West Indies, in the front rank of which I should place the large amount of peasant proprietorship. I do not, of course, retract what I have said earlier in this chapter as to the conditions which I regard as essential to the progress of the independent negro. If the alternative is between work on a plantation and the possession of land beyond the reach of civilising influences, I should declare unhesitatingly for the former. In view of the low mental development of the average negro, it is better for him to be a wage-earner than to work for himself as a perfunctory grower of ground provisions. In the former case, and especially upon sugar estates, where a large number of persons are necessarily concentrated within a small area, educational and religious advantages are never far distant. On the other hand, scarcity of employment must fall more hardly upon those who have no other resource, and the peasant proprietor has greater inducements to exertion. But the effect upon his children is doubtful: a warning note comes from Grenada,

where it is said[1] that "in many instances the acquisition of a small holding results in the persistent labour of the individual owner, while the younger generation, knowing that their parents possess as much as to furnish necessaries, are content to grow up in anything but a thrifty condition."

On the whole, as this consideration does not affect the broad principle, the right policy for those Colonies which can dispose of Crown Lands seems to be to prevent unregulated settlement by small holders and to attract, by the construction of roads and otherwise, a peasant proprietary upon such portions of the Crown Lands as abut upon established centres. The owners of the neighbouring estates will undoubtedly complain that their labourers are being drawn away. But in Trinidad and British Guiana at least, where there are already large numbers of indentured East Indians, the leakage can easily be made good. In Dominica, to mention one of the smaller islands, the supply of workmen being already scanty, the introduction of immigrants is contemplated whenever the extension of cultivation beyond the present narrow limits seems to demand it. And, if some temporary incon-

[1] "West Indian Royal Commission, 1897," p. 114.

venience is caused, the respective Governments have, on the one hand, no natural right to close the Crown Lands altogether against the bulk of the population, while, on the other, they are bound both to consider the circumstances of those who will take up holdings and to regard themselves as trustees for posterity.

This consideration suggests another reason why new settlements should be within reach of supervision, namely, that it is otherwise impossible to regulate the use of bush fires. In the last chapter we have seen that the Government of Trinidad realises the climatic importance of keeping a sufficient area of the island under timber, and other Governments will probably follow suit. If, therefore, areas are to be set aside for this purpose, it is the height of absurdity to allow proprietors to light fires at their pleasure. In Trinidad, indeed, a previous permission must have been obtained, and an open space of at least 25 feet in width must have been cleared round the land. In Jamaica, also, the negligent use or mismanagement of fires may be punished by fine or imprisonment. But in several islands the absence of legislative restriction has caused incalculable damage. At the last Agricultural Conference at Barbados, Mr. Watts, of Antigua,

complained that the efforts to reafforest the hill sides in St. Kitts and Montserrat were thwarted by the grass fires of the dry season. A representative of Montserrat knew of a case where nearly a square mile of forest on the mountain side had been destroyed by fire set by a peasant to clear an acre of rented land. And Dr. Nicholls, of Dominica, said that the destruction caused by bush fires in that island alone is "enormous, and is undoubtedly a serious drag on the prosperity of the island. During the dry season the fires may be seen in all directions along the coast, in the valleys, and on the hills. The absence of all control has rendered the people quite reckless in regard to them. If a peasant has to clear a few square yards of land to plant some ground provisions, he will set fire to the dry bush in the afternoon and then go gaily home without troubling as to where the fire may run to. A fire set in this way in Dominica, not very long ago, near to the sea, spread to neighbouring lands and produced a conflagration that raged for days, running up a wide valley, destroying everything in its path, and then reaching and seriously damaging cane and lime plantations on the hills. Dominica planters will tell the tale of how their cocoa and other plantations have been

greatly injured and the crops ruined by fires carelessly set in contiguous peasants' holdings; and they will tell also how their woodlands have been destroyed by similar fires. Indeed, the losses due to these constantly recurring fires have become so great that legislation is urgently needed. If the matter were carefully inquired into, it would be found that, year by year, an increasing extent of land is being rendered barren by bush fires." Though the fires, except where they were required to clear away the encumbering mass of wood when high timber had been felled, destroyed some of the fertilising agencies of the soil, Dr. Nicholls doubted whether it would be feasible to prevent them altogether. But it was essential that they should be limited effectually to the areas being cleared for cultivation.

One effect of these forest fires in Jamaica, as was pointed out by the delegate of the Agricultural Society of that island, has been to deter owners from letting to tenants land which they cannot themselves cultivate. The peasant proprietors, however, are far more numerous, even in proportion to population, than in any other West Indian Colony. The latest statistics give the estimated population as 745,000, and the number of holdings in the thirteen agricultural

parishes as 80,220, of which 60,784 do not exceed five acres, and only 248 exceed 1,500 acres. The small holdings are scattered throughout the island, and have been acquired either directly from the Crown or upon abandoned sugar estates. This is also the case in British Guiana, where, cultivation having been abandoned in the more remote districts after emancipation, the negroes returned to the coast and combined together to buy up land on old sugar plantations to the value of nearly £100,000. Upon these they erected cottages, and at the present time negro villages are found along the coast alternately with the sugar estates. But Dr. Morris, to whom I am indebted for these facts, adds that the class of black peasant farmers who own their land is not a large one.

On the general question of peasant ownership, it is possible to make the broad statement, that there is least of it where sugar predominates. There is none in Barbados or St. Kitts, and but little in Antigua, while it is very widely distributed in Dominica and Grenada. The single exception to this rule is the small island of Nevis, where, though there is practically no industry but sugar, small proprietors abound; but I am unable to explain how this state of affairs has arisen. As

to the remaining islands it is unnecessary to say more than that, while Montserrat and St. Lucia have diverse interests, there are both large and small holdings. The special circumstances of St. Vincent have already engaged our attention. And, in Trinidad, where, as we have seen, cocoa is now of more value than sugar as an export, there are said to be some 18,000 peasant proprietors, with holdings from five up to twenty acres, who cultivate cocoa, coffee, fruit, and vegetables. Quite recently they have taken to the growth of canes, under the conditions which I described in my first chapter. I then said that some of the cane-farmers experienced financial difficulties, but that these would be more conveniently treated in their effect upon all small holders alike.

And even this limitation is too great. I must not be tempted to revert to the lack of credit of many of the sugar planters, which is attributable to the uncertainty of their prospects caused by the Continental bounties; but there are other large cultivators, with the best of prospects, who are short of cash while their crops are maturing. Though such men have not any difficulty in obtaining advances, they pay interest at the rate of at least 6 per cent., and in many instances

they have to bind themselves to consign their produce through the lender and to buy their stores from him. Far worse is the lot of the farmers of a few acres of rented or freehold land. As far as I could gather, they have no borrowing facilities whatever, not because they may not be able to offer valid security, but because no lending agency would trouble to look at their application. When the same problem arose in the Antipodes, the Government of New Zealand instituted a regular system of advances to settlers, regarding it as an indispensable adjunct to their policy of encouraging settlement upon the land. The details will be found in my book, "Australasian Democracy," published by Mr. Fisher Unwin in 1897. The Province of South Australia followed upon similar lines, and so have Western Australia and Victoria. Precedents within the British Empire might therefore have been quoted by those who represented to the last Royal Commissioners that persons in the West Indies who were engaged in agriculture should be enabled, by the assistance of the State, to obtain loans of money at a low rate of interest. The authority of these Commissioners is deservedly so high that their conclusion will carry great weight:

"Owing to the small size and the isolation of many of the Colonies, banking facilities are no doubt limited, and there is a want of competition; but the main cause of the inability of agriculturists to obtain loans, as well as of the high rates of interest which are sometimes charged, appears to us to be the risk of loss which is inseparable from business of this class, especially in the present distressed state of the sugar industry.

"We do not doubt that in some cases, and under very careful management, advances of money by the State, or on a State guarantee, would be beneficial to agriculturists, but any system of State loans, or a State guarantee, is so liable to be mismanaged, and so likely to end in the loss of the money advanced, that we hesitate to recommend its general introduction."

It is satisfactory that the Commissioners recognised the reasonableness of the petition and, by implication, would not disapprove of a small tentative scheme. The reader will not fail to notice that the distressed state of the sugar industry is set down as the greatest obstacle; but I cannot see that the risk would be great if, as in Martinique, the advances are limited to a third of the certified value of the growing crop. For many years the Bank of Martinique has given

annual loans averaging three to three and a-half million francs at 5 per cent. and has failed to recover during the whole of that period only 3,000 francs of its capital. It was, however, compelled in some cases after the great hurricane of 1890 to remit one year's interest. Hitherto it has been the custom to charge sixty francs for valuation, but one of the directors told me that, finding that this amount pressed with undue weight upon the peasantry, he proposed to substitute a fixed rate of ½ per cent. upon the amount loaned. The total interest then paid would be 5½ per cent., which compares with anything from 12 to 60 per cent. at which small holders obtain accommodation from shopkeepers and others in the British islands. It seems absurd to give this wide margin, but I was assured by a trustworthy informant in Trinidad that, while the lower limit is rare, borrowers often, either from necessity or because they have little idea of the value of money, pay as much as 5 per cent. for a month's loan. From the same source I heard of a movement to institute co-operative agricultural banks consisting of persons who, by assuming individual and collective liability, could expect to be able to raise money at a cheaper rate than any one of them by himself. I expressed the doubt whether

either negroes or East Indians would have sufficient confidence in each other or in the organisers of the bank to be willing to give the necessary pledge. I was thinking of what I had been told in Grenada that the negro, suspicious of altruistic impulses, believes those who start undertakings on his behalf must have some ulterior motive which he is unable to fathom. However that may be, some East Indians in Trinidad and two groups of negroes in Barbados are anxious to try the experiment and are only waiting until the Governments shall give the necessary borrowing powers to associations of this character. As disproving the alleged distrust of the negroes of one another, I learn that, in some of the mills of Barbados, it is the custom for, say, twelve men to agree that each of them will pay 1s. weekly for twelve weeks and for the proceeds to be handed over each week to one of their number. It very rarely happens that those who have received their share fail to make the subsequent payments.

But, with every hope that both negroes and East Indians will take to co-operative banks, their growth is bound to be slow. In the meanwhile, I hope the Colonial Governments may be authorised to give advances upon a percentage, small if you

like, of the value of growing crops. There would be one safeguard which is lacking in Australia or New Zealand, though I do not know that its absence has caused the trouble that might be anticipated; the West Indian Executives would be entirely independent of the favour of the debtors of the Public Treasury. Such a policy would undoubtedly encourage holders of land to establish permanent forms of cultivation. There are already two inducements in this direction. In the Crown Lands' Regulations of St. Lucia, for instance, it is provided that the last instalment of purchase money shall be returned to those purchasers of Crown Lands who in four years have made good progress with the cultivation of economic plants. A concession of this kind is also made in Jamaica, and it is not likely that it should be limited to the two Colonies whose Land Regulations have come under my notice. The second inducement is afforded by the botanic stations throughout the Colonies, which supply thousands of plants every year, either gratuitously or at a very low price, to all applicants as far as they are able to meet the demand. By a large gratuitous distribution it has been hoped to give a good start to the settlers in St. Vincent upon the lands which, as related elsewhere, have been

purchased by the Government and are being subdivided into plots of five acres.

At this point it is important to remember the constant assistance afforded by the Directors of the Royal Gardens at Kew. I mention the fact because there may be many like myself who connected Kew simply with the idea of well laid-out gardens which were thrown open to the public, and knew nothing of the serious scientific researches. Such persons will share the surprise with which I learnt that for at least a hundred years no effort has been wanting on the part of the Home Government to supply the British West Indies with plants from all parts of the world which would form the foundation of cultural industries.

At the present time, though the efforts of Kew have not been relaxed, there is an even more direct connection. In the first chapter I have given some preliminary notes in regard to the Imperial Department of Agriculture, with special reference to the sugar-cane experiments, which, in view of the development of cane-farming, are of value to the planter and the small cultivator alike. It now behoves us to note what it is doing to foster other industries in which the peasantry, whether of negro or East Indian race, is more

widely and directly interested. In view of their ignorance of agricultural pursuits, the work of the Department in this direction is of an educational as well as of an experimental character.

It came into the field at a time when the necessity for the scientific study of agriculture was already recognised. The Botanical Department of Jamaica, indeed, has for the last hundred years been the means of introducing and propagating valuable plants, which now form the staple products of the island. Many years later botanic establishments were started in Trinidad and British Guiana, and within the last ten years or so, smaller stations in Barbados and the Leeward and Windward Islands. In accordance with a recommendation of the last Royal Commission, the latter have been placed under the control of the new Imperial Department and are maintained from Imperial funds. Thus, in the poorer Colonies, the Curator and others are paid by the Department, and the danger is obviated that, owing to a demand for retrenchment, there might be interference with scientific investigations of which the immediate benefit is not in every case manifest. The Elective Members of the Legislative Council of Antigua at one time refused to vote the salary of the Superintendent

of Agriculture on the ground that the Colony could not afford the charge. British Guiana, I believe, has a grant in aid of its Botanic Establishment; but I do not think that Jamaica or Trinidad receives any pecuniary assistance except that the latter is relieved of the expense of maintaining the station in Tobago, for which, since the amalgamation of the two islands, it would otherwise be responsible.

As the annual expenditure amounts to £17,500, we have a direct interest in assuring ourselves that the money voted by our Parliament is laid out to the best advantage. Omitting the sugar-cane experiments, to which sufficient reference has already been made, an important work has been the course of lectures on agriculture given last year to teachers in charge of elementary schools in all parts of the West Indies. They have naturally been of a tentative character, and in the larger islands some time must elapse before all the teachers can be given an opportunity to avail themselves of them. But the results are reported to be distinctly promising on the whole, especially in Trinidad. I was present when the Governor distributed the prizes to the teachers who had obtained the highest marks in the examination, and was struck by the look of

intelligence upon their faces. They were, of course, either negroes, East Indians, or coloured men.

A curious incident occurred in British Guiana. It was decided to spend a sum of £300 voted for agricultural instruction in giving instruction to schoolmasters in agricultural chemistry and botany, and some twenty-five teachers from Georgetown and thirty from the surrounding district responded to the invitation of the Government. But, when it was announced that the students would be required to attend an examination at the close of the lectures, nearly half of those from the town withdrew from the course. Subsequently the question arose whether a country teacher was entitled to receive the price of the second-class railway fare promised to him, when he had ridden in on his bicycle. The Government decided in the negative, whereupon one of the teachers, deputed by the others, informed the lecturer that they had decided as a body to cease attending the lectures. A very storm in a teacup! but it should be taken to heart by those who are impatient to see magnificent results.

Other objects upon which the funds of the Imperial Department have been expended were

summarised by Dr. Morris in his last annual address:

"Seven scholarships in Agriculture, tenable at Harrison College, Barbados, have now been awarded by the Imperial Department of Agriculture. Two scholarships of the annual value of £75 each have just been awarded in the Windward and Leeward Islands.

The first agricultural school in the West Indies, affording secondary education to selected boys who may afterwards become managers of estates or cultivate their own lands, was opened at St. Vincent in September. A similar agricultural school was opened at Dominica in December last. It is hoped that two more agricultural schools will be opened this year. It will be observed that the scheme of agricultural education outlined above is directed to reach every section of the community.

During the year three new experiment stations have been established at Montserrat, and one at Tortola for the Virgin Islands. At the present time there are nine botanic stations maintained from Imperial funds under the charge of the Imperial Department of Agriculture. In addition, there are twenty sub-stations, or experiment plots, started at Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and

Dominica, to encourage the improved cultivation of cacao, coffee, limes, and other crops. There are twelve central-manurial and local stations associated with the sugar-cane experiments at Barbados; seven similar stations at Antigua, and three at St. Kitts and Nevis. Experimental cultivation, with food and other crops, will also be carried on in connection with all the agricultural schools.

As means of encouraging the better cultivation and preparation of produce, agricultural shows have already proved of value. At St. Lucia, Dominica, and the Virgin Islands, excellent shows have been held on exactly the lines best calculated to bring into notice the resources of the islands and to create an intelligent interest in prosecuting new industries and improving those already existing. About £350 have been distributed in prizes by the Imperial Department of Agriculture and a hundred diplomas" have been awarded in cases of special merit."

It will, I think, be admitted that the experiment stations and agricultural shows are truly educational agencies and aptly supplement the direct agricultural instruction given to the younger generation. Upon the latter point there has been much discussion of recent years, and,

while there is a general agreement that you must not attempt to teach practical farming to children in elementary schools, there is no settled opinion as to what is actually feasible. The Educational Code in Jamaica which was promulgated in 1893, was subjected to revision in 1895, 1899, and 1900, and was to be amended and expanded in the present year. The latest changes include a large increase of marks for agricultural science and for organisation and discipline, with greater attention to manual training and practical work in gardening and agriculture. One of the inspectors recently reported that the greatest difficulty encountered by the few teachers who had the capacity to impart agricultural instruction was the unwillingness of the parents to allow their children to do any manual agricultural work at the school. He thought that more immediate good would be done by increasing the number of travelling lecturers and the frequency of their visits. The peasants were quick to observe the difference between good and bad cultivation, and he had perceived a gradual improvement in the methods of settlers living in the vicinity of the larger estates. The imitative faculty, he suggested, would be quickened if youths of the peasant class who had received a thorough agri-

cultural training could be settled upon small holdings among their own people.

This is but a sketchy treatment of a topic upon which several weighty papers were read at each of the three Agricultural Conferences at Barbados; but I can only spare the space to add that, before the formation of the Imperial Department, the Colonies differed in the extent to which agricultural subjects were included in the curriculum of the elementary schools. At one end of the scale we may place Jamaica, where grants were made by the Education Department of the Colony for instruction in scientific agriculture and country schoolmasters were expected to teach the elementary principles of agriculture by means of specially prepared Tropical Readers; at the other, Trinidad, which provided for no special instruction in agriculture, either in its elementary or industrial schools. "The cause of failure," said Dr. Morris in 1897, "in starting subsidiary industries in Trinidad, as in all the West Indian Colonies, is due to a want of knowledge of even the simplest elements of horticultural methods."

So sweeping a condemnation will soon become impossible in view of the various organisations now in being, which will increase the amount of

agricultural instruction afforded, directly and indirectly, both to children and adults. But the progress of the former will be conditioned by the fact that the teachers are men receiving small salaries who are drawn from an entirely different class from that which supplies the schoolmasters in British elementary schools. And the amount of illiteracy among the adults will act as a considerable obstacle. Further, in St. Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, and to some extent in Trinidad, there will be a difficulty as to the language, since the workers speak a French *patois* among themselves, and will imperfectly understand lectures given in English. But, even in a purely English island like Jamaica, when the last census was taken in 1891, the persons above five years of age who were able either to read and write or to read alone amounted to no more than 52·5 per cent. of the total population above that age. This was, however, a step in advance, as in the years 1861, 1871, and 1881, the similar centesimal proportion was 31·3, 35, and 45·7 respectively.

In most of the Colonies the elementary schools are denominational. In some the members of the Church of England get the bulk of the grant; in others, a considerable proportion goes to the

Roman Catholics, Moravians, Wesleyans, or Canadian Presbyterian missionaries working among the East Indians. The schools in Dominica are undenominational, as are a few in Jamaica, St. Vincent, and British Guiana. Fees are collected from the children whose parents are able or willing to pay them; but little pressure seems to be exercised. From one school in Barbados, containing 111 pupils, the fees in 1899 amounted to no more than £14 9s. 7d. In the whole of the Leeward Islands the total fees amounted to £180 as against £9,860 expended by the General Government. Jamaica levies for educational purposes a house-tax varying from 2s. to 6s. according to the annual value of the house. Compulsory attendance is provided for in several Colonies, but is only enforced at present in the Leeward Islands. From 1889, when the Act introducing compulsion was passed, to 1896 there was a progressive increase in the number of children on the rolls and a progressive improvement in the rate of attendance. Since the latter year there has been a relapse in those islands of the Colony which are most dependent upon the sugar crop. Parents resort to every device to evade the operation of the law, even to the point of changing the names of their

children. In 1896 alone has the total average attendance risen above 50 per cent. of the number upon the rolls,

In Vol. IV. of the Special Reports on Educational Subjects just issued by the Imperial Board of Education will be found a long account of the system of education in Jamaica, and a briefer note upon British Guiana. They deal with schools of all grades.

Legislative grants, of varying amount, are also made in Barbados, the Leeward Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, and British Guiana in aid of secondary schools. Some of these are denominational, including a school for girls in Grenada, which is attached to the Convent of St. Joseph; Trinidad directly maintains two undenominational secondary schools. In addition, Jamaica gives £300 annually to University College, which is connected with the High School, and several institutions have been founded in that island and elsewhere under charitable bequests. Probably the best-known educational establishment in the West Indies is Codrington College, Barbados, affiliated to the University of Durham, which was founded in the early part of the eighteenth century and disposes of trust funds and the revenue from landed estates. The number of students, how-

ever, is very small; not more than eight appear to have been in residence in 1899.

Industrial and reformatory schools have been started in some of the Colonies; but as I could do no more than give a bare enumeration of them (and my latest remarks already partake too much of this character), I will now pass on by a natural transition, from education to religion, especially as I shall introduce the new subject by summarising the extent to which the various denominations are subsidised.

Dominica, Antigua, and St. Vincent make no payments. Jamaica disestablished the Church of England in 1870, but provided for the continuance of their stipends to the existing clergy. In British Guiana, Trinidad, Barbados, St. Lucia, Montserrat, St. Kitts, and Grenada ministers of religion are partially supported out of the Colonial Exchequer. In the two latter Colonies the Church of England alone receives grants; in most of them it has the larger share; but in St. Lucia the Roman Catholics get £1,100 as compared with £400 paid to the Anglicans. The contributions vary in amount from £28,000 in British Guiana to £250 in St. Kitts. In Barbados the assistance is the most systematic: thirty-eight parochial clergy of the Church of

England receive stipends varying from £200 upwards, while small lump sums are handed over to the Wesleyans, Moravians, and Roman Catholics.

I am glad to have done with these sets of figures, which may be as tedious to my readers as they have been to me while I was working them out; but it seemed necessary to quote them in order to show how far the West Indian Churches are independent of the contributions of their members and of the parent societies. In no case, of course, would the Colonial grants be sufficient to meet all requirements. They are on the highest scale, relatively to the number of inhabitants, in British Guiana, Barbados, and Trinidad. In the case of these two islands they amount, I should have added, to £10,390 and £10,600 respectively.

The main question is, Are the Churches obtaining an increased hold over the negroes? Though I talked with many ministers of religion, I found it hard to form a definite opinion, but there is no doubt that in the poorest islands, like Antigua, religious work is retarded by the destitution of the congregations. The negroes are a proud race, and if they can no longer give their mites, and dress as they have been accustomed to do, cease to go to church.

When I was in Jamaica, though the material conditions are much less unsatisfactory, considerable attention had been aroused by the diminished attendance at the churches, all of which are now practically on a voluntary basis, as the annual payments guaranteed at the time of disestablishment have dwindled down to little more than £2,000. There was an uneasy feeling that the negroes were drifting away from religious influences. Fortunately, this question has been studied closely by Mr. Livingstone, of whose book mention has already been made. No apology need be offered for repeating some of his arguments, if it be true that the missionary societies at Home might have prevented this state of affairs if they had not expected results long before they can possibly be obtained. It is obvious that no aspersion is hereby intended; rather is it suggested that they should continue the work which they have begun so well. As Mr. Livingstone puts it, "The Jamaican Churches are in the transitional and most critical stage. Their members are emerging from barbarism and occupy the dangerous ledge which divides it from permanent Christianisation. Their foothold is far from secure, and any modification of the methods which have brought them to this point

will have the effect of plunging them back into the aboriginal slough." Whatever the cause may be, too great an importance attached to the outward adoption of Christianity, or the difficulty of securing contributions for long-established missions, all the parent societies, with one exception, have shown a tendency to force the Churches into independence. The Presbyterians in Scotland at one time pressed for further self-maintenance, but reversed their policy in deference to the strong convictions of a deputation which had visited the Colony. "Responsibility," according to Mr. Livingstone, "should be conceded very slowly. The people are advancing, but not so rapidly as the religious public at Home believe. The black and coloured catechists and ministers do not possess the inherited character of the white, nor do they obtain the same severe training. When put to the test in matters of management and finance and morality, they frequently fail, and a few cases of inviolate loyalty to principle do not justify the concession of general trust and power." If I am right in thinking that schoolmasters would not be of a very different social standing from negro ministers, it is pertinent to remark that, in the last annual report from Jamaica, there is a severe criticism

of the proved dishonesty and immorality of some among the male teachers. In one particular Mr. Livingstone displays a marked agreement with Mr. Benjamin Kidd. The periodical contact with a robust civilisation, which the latter regards as essential for the administrative staff, the former insists upon equally strongly for ministers of religion. But, "if a missionary remains long at his post, it is counted to his honour, whereas it is usually to the dishonour of the service in which he is engaged." [1] I put it to the missionary societies whether they ought to abandon an incomplete work in the West Indies, or whether, in other words, there can be a higher object than to bring to fruition that which has been begun so well. I am not unmindful of the arguments upon the other side: a time comes when the local Church should no longer be kept in leading strings, when the local people, for their own good, should be encouraged to depend largely upon themselves. When this time has arrived will depend, in my opinion, entirely upon the individual missionary. If, throughout his labours, he has watched his men, given responsibility where responsibility seemed justifiable, and identified the worshippers with the interests of

[1] "Black Jamaica," pp. 268–78.

the Church, he will lead them to a point where a general supervision is alone necessary. These remarks are offered with all deference to those who have studied the work of missionaries from a distance and may have insufficiently grasped the enormous difficulties inherent in their task. If I were to summarise my own impressions, I should say that the Home societies require to give more rather than less assistance than heretofore, and to realise that some of the congregations simply cannot support their pastors. The giving capacity of an East Indian or a negro is very different from that of an English artisan.

And yet they do manage to have some savings; but we cannot hope to weigh them accurately from the official information, which is singularly scanty. It could not, of course, tell us how far peasant proprietors invest their incomes in the land or whether others economise in order to become landholders. There are, however, certain tests by which the rate of average prosperity is judged elsewhere—the strength of Friendly Societies, for instance. But what can we make of the return from Jamaica giving the names of certain Friendly Societies, of which two alone state the number of the members, while none appear to be incorporated under any

legislative authority, and none give the amount of their invested funds? And what of Life Insurance? I search in vain for information in any of the West Indian Bluebooks, and yet I learn from the "Jamaica Handbook" the bald fact that twelve Life Insurance Offices are represented in Jamaica. One of the directors of the Jamaica Mutual has, I regret to say, not sent me the facts which he promised concerning his society. In regard to Savings Banks alone, adequate details are given, and I append a summary for the four most populous Colonies:

| | Population estimated 1899. | Number of Depositors. | Amount of Deposits. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jamaica (March 31, 1900)... | 745,000 | 32,860 | £466,852 |
| Barbados (Sept. 20, 1900)... | 192,000 | 13,454 | £221,083 |
| British Guiana (Dec. 31, 1899) ... ... ... | 287,000 | 18,052 | £291,996 |
| Trinidad (Dec. 31, 1899) ... | 261,000 | 12,549 | £255,928 |

The figures for British Guiana and Trinidad include, of course, the deposits of East Indians as well as negroes; but, before passing over specifically to the former, it is necessary to consider the negro in a final aspect—his wage-earning capacity. How much truth is there in the commonly accepted view of his laziness? Here is what the last Royal Commission said

on the subject: "The negro is an efficient labourer, especially when he receives good wages. He is disinclined to continuous labour extending over a long period of time, and he is often unwilling to work if the wages offered are low, though there may be no prospect of his getting higher wages from any other employer." The traveller hears so many different accounts that he welcomes a definite statement of this character. As to the negro's distaste for continuous exertion, I do not know that we need take into consideration the enervating effects of the climate, as most men require an adequate inducement if they are to earn more than will suffice to keep them and their families. If exceptionally high wages are offered, the negro is as much attracted as anybody else would be. That is why he used to go to the Panama Canal works, to the goldfields of Venezuela and French Guiana, and why he now accepts employment upon the railway under construction in Ecuador, for which labourers are being engaged at the rate of 2s. 6d. a day. At home he would have to be content with 1s. 6d. or less, even in the more prosperous islands, and he would find wages on the downward grade. Probably that is the explanation of the negro's alleged distaste for work upon a

sugar estate, which some believe to be associated in his mind with the traditions of slavery. But, as Sir Nevile Lubbock said in my presence: "In Barbados the negro will do any kind of work he can earn money at, but in Trinidad it is a very different thing. He will fork the land, but nothing will induce him to weed, or to load canes into the railway trucks. Now, forking is harder than weeding, and his explanation of why he refuses to weed is that he considers this is a woman's or child's work. The blacks, in fact, are a very vain people, and, like some of our fashionable people here, will not do what they consider to be unfashionable. In Demerara they will always do trenching work, which is very hard work, but by which they can earn in two days enough to keep them for the whole week. The black man prefers to do one or two days' hard work rather than six steady days' easy work." If a working man in England were in the fortunate position of being able to earn enough in two days to keep him for a week, he would be a bold man who would maintain that he would always get a week's work out of him. I seem to have read somewhere that the miners in the North of England take frequent holidays.

Sir Nevile's views are confirmed by the gold-

miners of British Guiana. Though the work is the hardest and roughest in the Colony, it is entirely in the hands of the negroes, who, though popularly regarded as opposed to anything in the nature of an indenture, do not hesitate to tie themselves down by four month's contracts. At the expiration of this period, according to the Secretary of the Institute of Mines who draws up the agreements, they want to revisit their families. The rate of pay, he informed me, is fixed at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a day, and there are never less than ten thousand men upon the goldfields. The collection of balata gum and the felling of timber are arranged for under similar agreements.

What is practically a form of indenture also exists in Antigua, where, under an old but effective statute, the occupation of a house upon a sugar estate binds the tenant to work for the owner while the owner is bound to provide him with regular employment at current rates. This somewhat patriarchal relationship has doubtless been maintained on account of the pleasant feeling between employers and employed in Antigua, to which I have already had occasion to refer. Its comparative absence elsewhere, due to the difficulty with which the members of one

race thoroughly understand those of another, may account for the misunderstandings which arise between them. It is probable that employers, forgetful that the negro can be led but cannot be driven, do not always treat him in the right way. But, as my small experience convinced me, he is a most annoying servant. If he does not understand an order, he will proceed to do something or other rather than ask that it may be repeated.

There are persons who think that the negro is unfairly treated by the introduction of indentured East Indians. The negro, they say, pays in taxation his share of the part of the cost of bringing in immigrants which is placed upon general revenue. I can see nothing in this objection, partly because the coolies themselves contribute to the taxes, but principally because their presence gives an impetus to production which must add far more to the revenue than is taken away by this particular item of expenditure. Indeed, if it be true that the sugar industry would otherwise have failed in Trinidad and British Guiana, the negro might have been called upon, especially in the latter Colony, to bear a far greater burden of taxation. It seems, however, unfair to raise the money as in

Trinidad by export duties upon certain products in the cultivation of which coolies have not always been employed.

It is also contended that the wages of negroes are reduced by the competition of the coolies. This objection seems to me equally groundless. Wages, as a matter of fact, are no lower in Trinidad, with its thousands of coolies, than in Barbados. The coolies are brought in to do work which the negro will not look at; and the market for agricultural labourers cannot well become overstocked as long as they have the alternative of taking up land upon their own account. As artisans and shopkeepers, the free coolies and their descendants do undoubtedly compete with the negroes; but there is room enough for all, and will be for many years to come.

I have left myself little space, in a chapter which has already extended to an inordinate length, to speak of the coolies under indenture. I use this qualification advisedly because inferences as to their general condition and prospects may be drawn from what has been said, and will be said, under other headings such as the alienation of Crown Lands, agricultural instruction, the system of taxation, cane-farming, &c., in regard

to British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica, which has some fifteen thousand East Indians. They are also to be found in St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent, but not in sufficient numbers to merit special mention. It must be remembered that, at the conclusion of their five years of obligatory labour, the indentured immigrants practically become free men and, subject to their right to claim their repatriation five years later or at any subsequent period, become identified with the interests of the Colony which they inhabit. The general considerations affecting its welfare and progress therefore apply equally to them.

I am the less concerned at my lack of space to treat the system of indenture adequately as Mr. Alleyne Ireland, in his "Tropical Colonisation," devotes fifteen pages to a full summary of the Ordinance of 1891 which regulates matters in British Guiana and has been taken as the model for legislation in other Colonies. It would be superfluous to repeat what can be found elsewhere and contrary to my purpose, which is to retail facts insufficiently known and to place facts which may be known in a due relation to each other.

Suffice it, then, to say that the ordinance in question takes every precaution that is possible

to secure the immigrants from oppression and that, to the question whether the law really represents the actual practice, Mr. Ireland replies that "during the three years spent by me in observing the actual working of the system in British Guiana, I was convinced that the law is completely operative."

I will only add one or two general remarks. The first is, that no comparison can justly be made with the introduction of Kanakas into Queensland. The East Indians are drawn from a congested population; they are protected, when they engage themselves, by an agent of their own Government; and they are recruited, not by their future employers, but by the Government of the Colony in which they are required.

Further, most of them leave their country permanently, thus proving their contentment with the new conditions which they encounter. At home they would probably earn 2d. or 3d. a day; under indenture they are entitled to 1s. In Trinidad there are 84,000 East Indians, of whom not more than 9,180 are still indentured. In British Guiana, the respective figures are given as 118,000 and 13,000. Settlement in the West Indies has been fostered by the wise provision that at least 40 per cent. of the immi-

grants must be females. Very favourable reports are made as to the physique of the children of East Indian immigrants, which is said to be superior to that of their parents.

Hitherto the coolies have shown a progressive tendency to remain in the country of their adoption. In some cases they accept grants of money or land in commutation of their right to a return passage. But, if the sugar industry failed and there were a consequent large increase in the demand for repatriation, a heavy burden would undoubtedly be thrown upon the Governments of Trinidad and British Guiana, as it would be impossible to raise the cost from the sugar estates. Apart, however, from the unlikelihood that the Imperial Government will allow matters to come to such a pass, the best safeguard lies in giving the East Indians an interest in the land. Of course they have the right, equally with other inhabitants, to purchase holdings from the Government, but it has been found advisable in British Guiana to settle some of them in villages under the care of a superintendent who directs their initial efforts. I think the only valid objection to the system of indenture from the point of view of the immigrants is that, being housed and tended medically free of expense and

earning regularly ample wages for their maintenance, they sometimes lose the faculty for holding their own in ordinary life. Many, indeed, especially in Trinidad, are doing excellently as cane-farmers, growers of cocoa, shopkeepers, or schoolmasters. For the remainder it is well to have some supervised system of land settlement, as there can be no question of relaxing the stringency of the conditions imposed upon the planters in their dealings with indentured labourers.

Leroy Beaulieu, the eminent French economist, condemns the introduction of workmen on the ground that it deters planters from carrying out improvements which would have been forced upon them if labour had been scarcer. The conditions of Barbados give some support to this theory; but in British Guiana and Trinidad it would rather seem as if the certainty of a regular supply of labour, by the elimination of one element of risk, has induced the planters to sink additional capital in the erection of the most efficient machinery.

Nobody would by choice advocate a system which fetters men's liberty of action, even for a short term of years. It would be absurd to deny that there must be individual cases of hardship

and injustice, however strict be the watch maintained by the Government. But, if it be true that these two rich Colonies could not have been developed without the aid of indentured immigrants, that most of the East Indians attain a position of comfortable independence, and that even the negroes have benefited indirectly, as I think they undoubtedly have, from the achievement of a wide measure of prosperity which would otherwise have been impossible, I cannot hesitate as to the conclusion at which I must arrive. And the favourable opinion reached upon general considerations receives emphatic confirmation in the course of a personal tour round the West Indies.

# CHAPTER IV

## TAXATION AND ADMINISTRATION

IN no part of the British Empire has the system of government been subject to such criticism as in the West Indies, and nowhere have there been such constant changes in its form. At the present time the Executive is in all cases in the hands of persons nominated by the Crown and responsible to it alone. In the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, and Trinidad the Legislature consists of the Governor, persons nominated by him, and the principal officials. In British Guiana and Jamaica it is partially elective, the elected members being now in a minority in the latter Colony, while in the former they have a majority upon financial matters alone. The Constitution of British Guiana is unique in the British Empire : ordinary legislative functions appertain to the Court of

Policy consisting of the Governor, seven official and eight nominated members; but the power of imposing the taxes, auditing the public accounts, and discussing the Estimates is vested in the Combined Court, which is composed of the members of the Court of Policy and six elective Financial Representatives. Barbados, alone of the West Indian Colonies which I am considering, but similarly with the Bahamas and Bermudas, has two Houses of Parliament, of which the Upper is nominated by the Crown, the Lower wholly elective. In Barbados also five members of the Legislature are appointed by the Governor to the Executive Committee which introduces money votes, prepares the Estimates, and initiates Government measures. In Jamaica, British Guiana, the Leeward Islands, St. Vincent, and Grenada the Executive Council comprises one or more unofficial nominated members. In Trinidad and St. Lucia it consists entirely of officials. This is, I think, a mistaken policy. In the preparation of the Estimates and of legislative proposals it is advisable that the Governor should be able to supplement the views of his officials by those of persons directly interested in the development of the Colony.

It is true that the Executive Council corre-

sponds to the Cabinet in the United Kingdom or the self-governing Colonies, which is always confined to Ministers. But the conditions are not identical. A greater practical knowledge of local requirements will obviously be possessed by a resident Responsible Minister than by a member of the Colonial Service who is shifted to a fresh post every few years. It must be admitted, however, that the Executive Councils of Ceylon and the Straits Settlements are purely official and that the arrangement appears to work quite smoothly.

In the old days, indeed, the members of the Legislative Councils, in most of the West Indian Colonies, acted as the constitutional advisers of the Governor in Executive matters. The present Executive Council is a modern institution.

The earliest form of constitution, consisting of a Nominated Council and an Elective Assembly, was due to the fact that the English settlers carried with them the rights of Englishmen and evolved Legislatures approximating as closely as possible to those which they had known at Home. At a time when the whites were more numerous and before the days of steam communication or the telegraph, such a constitution was not unnatural; but it is strange

to find that as lately as 1866 each of the small Colonies of Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis had its Upper and its Lower House and all the paraphernalia of Government. Can anything more absurd be imagined, in view of their diminutive area and insignificance? St. Kitts and Nevis, which are not more than two miles apart where the intervening channel is narrowest, with a combined area of 150 square miles, or about the size of Rutland, and a population of less than 50,000, were burdened with four separate Houses of Parliament!

In 1882 the two islands were united into one Presidency, but they had previously first replaced the two Houses by one Legislative body and then withdrawn from it the elective element. At varying periods Grenada, Montserrat, and St. Vincent also gave up elective representatives. And in 1898 Antigua and Dominica followed the example, as the Imperial Government made it a condition of their grants in aid of revenue and for the repayment of loans that the control over expenditure should ultimately rest with the Governor. The necessary legislation was secured in Antigua without difficulty, but in Dominica only by a bare majority of votes and in the face of considerable popular protests. Trinidad and

St. Lucia, which were ceded to Great Britain at about the same time as Grenada, have, I know not why, never had representative institutions, though the latter might more reasonably have asked for them than the smaller island.

Thus, as the result of a series of constitutional changes extending from 1876 to 1898, all the Leeward and Windward Islands are, similarly with Trinidad, without representative institutions, except in parochial matters, to which a short reference will be made at a later stage. And it was in 1899 that, by the appointment of four additional nominated members, the electives upon the Legislative Council in Jamaica were placed in a permanent minority. This alteration, which was effected upon the direct instructions of the Secretary of State, was in pursuance of his promise, when the House of Commons sanctioned an advance to Jamaica under the Colonial Loans Act, and gave an Imperial subsidy to the new service between Bristol and Jamaica, that the Imperial Authorities should be placed in a position to regulate the expenditure of the island. No legislation was required in the Colony, as the Order in Council which added an elective element to the Legislative Council contained the necessary powers. Incidentally, I should like

to say that some Jamaicans, comparing recent events in their country with those in the Leeward Islands, attribute to Mr. Chamberlain a desire to curtail representative privileges in the West Indies. I do not think it is likely he had any such idea, however natural it might have been under the circumstances of the West Indies: the businesslike contention that Imperial control should accompany Imperial assistance is in itself a sufficient explanation of his action.

But to return to the Jamaica Order in Council, which contains some noteworthy points. It will be remembered that it was a restoration in modified form, of powers possessed by the old House of Assembly which, after the troubles under Governor Eyre, it had admitted itself too weak to exercise. I think the Order in Council of 1884 was vitiated by the inclusion of a series of checks and safeguards. On the one hand, while the Legislative Council, which was subsequently enlarged, contains fourteen elective members, the Crown is empowered to nominate ten persons in addition to the five who sit as office-holders, whereby the elective element may be placed in a minority; on the other, the elective members are to vote first, and the votes of the other members are not to be taken, unless a matter has been

declared by the Governor to be of paramount importance to the public interest, if not less than nine electives have opposed a financial proposal, or all of them any other proposal whatever. And there was a tacit understanding that while the new Constitution was upon its trial, the full number of nominated members should not be appointed. But in 1899, when a higher tariff was deemed urgent on account of successive deficits, the elective members declined to pass the first reading of the new Bill, thus postponing the collection of the duties, until the Estimates had been laid before them. The Governor then carried the day by nominating four additional members and declaring the revenue law to be of paramount importance. I do not propose to enter into the merits of this particular question, but I think it is a great mistake, in a country like Jamaica with its mass of illiterate blacks, to have any constitution but one which is absolutely staightforward. The people can understand Crown Colony Government or à wholly elective Assembly as in Barbados. What is unintelligible to them is a Constitution with latent powers which are suddenly unearthed in order to cope with an emergency. It seemed to some very much like a breach of faith on the part of the Government.

Matters have now quieted down, and from reports received the officials and the elective members have co-operated harmoniously during this year's session. They have sunk their differences, perhaps only temporarily, in the face of a most unsatisfactory financial situation. And the position of the electives has not been strengthened by the elections which took place at the beginning of the present year. Though the two leading newspapers had been conducting for months a spirited campaign against the action of the Governor, so general was the political indifference that four of the constituencies were actually without a candidate within a fortnight of the contest. In the seven constituencies in which there was a contested election, of 8,643 registered electors only 2,310 exercised the franchise. And the fourteen members who were returned included four clergymen. Their participation in legislative functions has, quite unfairly, been made the subject of hostile criticism. I am confident that they have come forward because the leading men in the community have declined to spare the time from their ordinary avocations. There is a general complaint that the planters and men of business are evincing a declining interest in the practical legislative work of their country. And

if the leading men do not care, while the electors will not vote, one begins to doubt the efficacy of representative institutions to Jamaica.

Indeed, the Jamaican *Daily Gleaner*, which realised that the political future of the country might depend upon the attitude of the electorate, frankly faces the situation and does not seek to hide its disappointment.

"The popular apathy in connection with the elections is remarkable. In Clarendon there are 850 voters and only some 166 went to the poll. St. Mary has 1,225 voters and only 280 turned out. In St. Thomas there are 886 voters and only 133 voted. Such results are very depressing. We are receiving messages from various parts of the country which show that absolutely no interest whatever is being manifested in the situation. In many districts the people do not know that there is a general election going on. Our Ulster Spring correspondent telegraphs that this is the case there. This indifference is by no means confined to the peasant class. On writing recently to one of our local correspondents in a head polling-town to send us up the nominations to take place a day or two after, he replied that the day was not known. The despatches from our reporters in various

centres testify to the prevalence of the same ignorance."

The Session of the Council was not opened until the 27th of February, but by the 21st of the following month the elected members had become so lax in their attendance that half a dozen of them were rarely to be seen in the Council Chamber at the same time. The most languid interest was being taken in the proceedings, and even if two or three members summoned up enough energy to initiate a discussion, nobody seemed to pay much attention to them. Of what use, then, is it to maintain a Constitution which can never be really satisfactory, as it maintains a divided responsibility?

But there is another point to be noticed. While in 1901 little more than 25 per cent. of the electors chose to go to the poll, in 1863, when the population was not half of what it is now, and the electorate not more than one-eighth, every seat was contested and four out of every five electors voted. I adduce therefrom the view that the suffrage now embraces a section of the population which is not capable of an intelligent participation in political affairs. The spread of education would have justified a con-

trary anticipation; but facts are stubborn things, and I fail to understand how, in view of the actual listlessness, it can seriously be proposed to lower the electoral qualification. At the present time any tenant of a dwelling-house, rated in respect of the poor rate, who has, during the previous twelve months paid taxes to the amount of not less than 10s., may be registered as a voter; and in 1893 the island contained 42,000 voters or about one in fifteen of the total population. Two years later the number had fallen to 38,000, and in 1900 to little more than 16,000. During the intervening years no change had been made in the electoral laws and the drop can only be explained on the supposition that, the times being bad, wholesale disqualification has followed upon the receipt of parochial or medical relief. Thus the remnant must consist of the most thrifty and independent, who, as we have seen, are yet so indifferent to their electoral privileges that little more than one in four of them has taken the trouble to go to the poll.

I think it is too much the custom to assume that, wherever the British flag flies, irrespective of latitude or the character of the population, the authorities should aim at establishing representative institutions. The precedent of Australia,

Canada, and other temperate countries, has caused people to regard the natural evolution of a British Colony as being from Crown Colony Government, through the intermediate stage in which the inhabitants legislate and tax themselves while the Crown retains control of the administration, to a position of virtual independence. Even so distinguished a writer as Sir Charles Dilke believes, or believed, that the government of the British West Indian Islands must become, with the lapse of time, more democratic and more in the hands of the inhabitants. And Mr. C. S. Salmon, in a book widely circulated by the Cobden Club, avows that his "chief object is to see every British Colony in a position to be able to determine its internal affairs for itself, by being endowed with that measure of liberty termed local self-government, without which British administration can never be worked anywhere to advantage."

Beyond Jamaica, the only Colonies possessing representative institutions which come under our survey, are British Guiana with 2,928 electors to 287,000 inhabitants, and Barbados, whose population of 192,000 contains 2,044 electors. Mr. Salmon regards the Barbados assembly as the only reasonable one, presumably because it is

wholly elective; but his claims on behalf of the negro cannot be very great when he is satisfied with a constitution which gives a vote but to one person in every ninety. His main contention is that the interference of the Imperial authorities in the internal affairs of Colonies "has always ended in the creation of a terribly expensive local machinery of government, a waste of public money and of resources, local discontent, and comparative failure." He even says that the Crown Colonies proper, if they continue without the breath of liberty, are certain to fall astern and to die a premature death from inanition. But he would find it hard to substantiate this assertion if he compared the present position and prospects of Jamaica with those of Trinidad, which has been unfettered by local interference. Without indulging in a sweeping contradictory statement, I attribute the greater prosperity of the latter Colony largely to the benefits derived from Crown Colony Government and from the steady stream of East Indian immigration.

Sir Robert Hamilton, who had been requested to report upon the condition of Dominica in 1894, made some interesting observations. The Assembly then consisted of an equal number of electives and nominees, and the relations of the

Government with the former were naturally most unsatisfactory. So Sir Robert was urged locally to advocate an increase in the number of the electives, but declined to do so on the ground that, as they were elected on a register containing only 612 names, out of a population of 27,000, they had no case for a majority in the legislature. It was true, he added, that if every person qualified to vote were placed upon the register, the number would be largely increased; but the fact that so few took the trouble to register themselves was an indication of their want of knowledge of the duties of citizenship, and probably of their inability to appreciate them. He therefore proposed that the number of electives should remain at seven, that the officials should be limited to three, and that four other members should be nominated, who should be selected with the distinct object of securing that the interests of those who were not on the register of voters, and who formed the great majority of the inhabitants, should be safeguarded in the Assembly.

The last portion of Sir Robert Hamilton's recommendation is admirable, but I fail to see what advantage he anticipated from the retention of the elective element. Taking the West Indies

generally, the planters will always have sufficient influence with the Government, and as to the mass of the workers, I believe that they are looked after better by men of wide sympathies nominated by the Governor both to the Executive and Legislative Councils than by representatives in whose selection they fail to take a proper interest.

I am well aware of the value attaching to political education. It is bound to be great if the electorate is in the least responsive. If it is not, it yet rests with those who believe in the widest enfranchisement at home to put forward very strong grounds if they reject it elsewhere. Such grounds are to be found, as will be seen later, in Jamaica, but not to a similar extent in Barbados or British Guiana.

There is much authoritative opinion opposed to that of Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Salmon. Mr. C. P. Lucas, who would doubtless write with more freedom if he did not occupy an important official position, says that "wherever the question arises of giving popular institutions to a dependency in which the Europeans are not the majority, to reason from the example of such a country as Australia is false and misleading. The ground of self-government is, that those

who are in the Colony are on the same level in physique and intelligence with those who are in the Mother Country, and that, being on the spot, they are best able to take care of themselves. Where the colonists are few among many of inferior race, it does not at all follow that they are best able to take care of that race." [1]

Mr. Froude is very outspoken. So greatly, indeed, is he impressed with the necessity of a strong Government that in his "English in the West Indies" he constantly recurs to the subject. Numerous quotations might be given, but one will suffice to explain the tenor of his argument. "If the Antilles are ever to thrive, each of them should have some trained and skilful man at its head, unembarrassed by local Elected Assemblies. The whites have become so weak that they would welcome the abolition of such assemblies. The blacks do not care for politics, and would be pleased to see them swept away to-morrow if they were governed wisely and fairly. Of course, in that case it would be necessary to appoint governors who would command confidence and respect. But let governors be sent, who would be governors indeed, like those who administer

[1] Lewis's "Government of Dependencies," 1891, pp. xxxii., xxxiii.

the Indian Presidencies, and the white residents would gather heart again, and English and American capitalists would bring their money and their enterprise, and the blacks would grow upwards instead of downwards. . . . We have thought it wise, with a perfectly honest intention, to leave our Dependencies generally to work out their own salvation. We have excepted India, for with India we dare not run the risk. But we have refused to consider that others among our possessions may be in a condition analagous to India, and we have allowed them to drift on as they could. It was certainly excusable, and it may have been prudent, to try popular methods first, but we have no right to persist in the face of a failure so complete. We are obliged to keep these islands, for it seems that no one will relieve us of them; and if they are to remain ours, we are bound so to govern them that our name shall be respected and our sovereignty shall not be a mockery." [1]

Yet another extract, from Mr. Kidd's "Control of the Tropics": "The one underlying principle of success in any future relationship to the tropics is to keep those who administer the government which represents our civilisation in

[1] P. 144 and pp. 153–4.

direct and intimate contact with the standards of that civilisation at its best; and to keep the acts of the Government itself within the closest range of that influence, often irksome, sometimes even misleading, but always absolutely vital — the continual scrutiny of the public mind at Home." [1]

After perusing Mr. Kidd's work carefully, I cannot find that he specifically advocates the abolition of the Local Assemblies, but if we must abandon, as he suggests, the idea that the coloured races left to themselves possess the qualities necessary to the development of the rich resources of tropical countries, I think we shall come to the conclusion that the power of legislation and taxation must be vested in the same hands as that of administration.

The dissociation of these functions is only justifiable as a halt upon the road to greater local freedom. If the next stage is not likely to be covered within any measurable time, the difficulties inherent in this system of government become accentuated. How is it possible to defend the severance of legislative from administrative authority, except where, as in the United States, the constituent body is practically the same in both cases?

[1] P. 57.

It certainly has not been successful in the British Empire. Referring to the old West Indian Constitutions, most of which, as we have seen, have been superseded, Mr. Herman Merivale says [1] that they "worked as old institutions will work—quietly in the main, but subject on the one hand to a constant internal antagonism, on the other to much corruption. The antagonism lay in a perpetual conflict between the Legislative and Executive powers, of which neither was responsible to the other, and neither could control the other. The Crown could not compel the imposition of a tax, or the payment of a single public officer. The Assembly could not compel the Crown to nominate or to dismiss any functionary. As a general rule, all held their offices practically for life. The political existence of a community so formed necessarily consists of a series of quarrels and reconciliations between the two opposing authorities. Compromises were constantly being effected, and sometimes at the cost of the community. The abuses and corruption, of which standing complaints were made, were of two kinds: the appointment of unfit men, or creation of sinecure places, by irresponsible

[1] "Colonisation and Colonies," pp. 640–1. Edition of 1861.

authority in England or the Colony; and the uncontrolled voting of public money by the Assemblies. For these bodies, jealous of the Executive, to which they were constantly opposed, never would part with a most mischievous branch of their power, by surrendering the initiative of money votes to the Local Governments. To this day, in most West Indian Colonies any Member of Assembly can propose a money vote."

Mr. Merivale's last objection no longer holds good in Barbados, British Guiana, or Jamaica, the only West Indian Colonies having elective institutions with which we are now concerned.

Students of Colonial questions will not require to be reminded of the complete failure of representative institutions in Canada in the early part of last century. It is, therefore, somewhat strange that they should have been established, a few years later, in Cape Colony; but contemporary records show that the full privileges of Responsible Government were withheld for a time on account of the inaccessibility of many parts of the Colony and the numerical preponderance of an alien race. A similar advance is impossible in the West Indies, if for no other reasons, because the whites form a much smaller minority

and because, with the exception of a few favoured districts, European colonisation is excluded by climatic conditions. The exceptional districts are the highlands of Jamaica and Dominica and, possibly, certain partially explored portions of British Guiana. Englishmen have lived for many generations in Barbados, but the strain has been subject to degeneration.

About the time (1853) that Cape Colony was given partial control of its destinies, Victoria and Queensland were carved out of New South Wales, but, as there was no numerous alien race, they received, the latter immediately, the former after four years, the fullest measure of local self-government.

In 1872 Cape Colony was placed upon the same footing, after the intermediate stage had produced the inevitable amount of friction.

So much for the lessons of the past. If we seek a present exemplification of the dangers of a divided responsibility, we shall find it in the recent experiences of Jamaica. That Colony has been in a bad way financially for many years, but when it became necessary to enact remedial measures, the Government wanted to increase taxation, the Elective Members of the Council to reduce expenditure. Subsequent events showed

that both were necessary. Owing to the working of the Constitution, however, the Government were unable to carry their proposals for increased taxation, and the Electives were unable to enforce a reduction in expenditure. Hence there was much friction and waste of time, and the finances went from bad to worse.

Mr. Salmon would probably have made a point of the desire of the Electives to reduce expenditure and might have adduced it as evidence in support of his contention that "some of these Colonies have suffered from over-taxation and unjust taxation, from over-expenditure and unjust expenditure, and even from the want of roads, railways, harbours, and other necessary public works, where these might have been made."[1] We must, therefore, go a little more deeply into the question. Granting the apathy of the negroes, and the disputes likely to arise between the Administration and the Legislature under Representative Government, we should still hesitate to recommend Direct Government by nominees of the Crown if it can be proved to lead to extravagance and unjust taxation or to arrest the natural course of development.

Let us consider the rate of expenditure first.

[1] "The Crown Colonies of Great Britain," p. 21.

Taking the West Indies as a whole, we learn from Mr. Salmon that the annual expenditure rose from £1,598,665 in 1874 to £2,053,570 in 1884. (By 1899 there had been a further rise to £2,495,625.) Thereupon he remarks that Constitutional legislatures would never have permitted such an increase of expenditure; but I do not know where he would find any justification for this opinion, which was at one time shared by Mr. Herman Merivale but was subsequently modified by him. While admitting that much of the indebtedness of Australia and New Zealand has been contracted for the building of public works, such as railways, which are directly remunerative, the fact remains that the general rate of expenditure is on a distinctly high, if not extravagant, scale. Indeed, I look in vain for any confirmation of the theory that self-government spells economy. We have sufficiently clear object lessons to the contrary in the growing expenditure of our National and Local Government.

But there is a false as well as a true test of economy. If you are to get the right class of men you must be prepared to pay higher salaries for first-class Administrators when you introduce them from outside than when, as in Australia or

Canada, you grow them in the country. But I cannot see any necessity for so vast an army of minor officials in the West Indies. Jamaica pays more than £29,000 in salaries alone to the staff of the Customs, Internal Revenue, and Excise Department; and Trinidad £20,000 for its Medical Officers, most of whom are also allowed to take private practice. These men, however, are principally creoles, so there is no foundation for the imputation that berths are specially created for the Secretary of State's friends.

Nor does it seem an easy matter to effect any adequate retrenchment. A Royal Commission visited the West Indies in 1883 but was unable to make any comprehensive recommendations. On the whole, we should conclude that the administrative staff is too large, that reductions are hampered by vested interests, but that it is bound to be maintained upon a scale incommensurate with either the resources or the population of the Colonies as long as each of them, roughly speaking, has to carry out all the functions of a separate Government. In Jamaica, nevertheless, where the strain is most acute, it has been found possible, within the space of the last three years, to reduce the annual expenditure by more than £100,000; and, as the Governor has

recently put it, since the Elected Members do not claim to have reduced expenditure more than £31,000, the Government are left with the credit for at least £69,000.

Let us now shift our point of view, and, admitting that the expenditure was at least half as large again in 1899 as in 1874, consider what there is to show for it. It would be tedious to take each of the Colonies separately, to extend the comparison so as to include some of the intervening years, or to analyse more than a few of the chief items in the accounts. Nor, indeed, have I any qualifications for undertaking a general survey such as that which was asked of the Royal Commission to which I have just referred. By a fortunate coincidence their investigations synchronised almost exactly with those of Mr. Salmon, but whereas he contended that there was really nothing to show for the increased expenditure, while the condition of the West Indies demanded rather a retrenchment in expenditure than an increase in the taxation of the people, the Commissioners, on the contrary, were able to point out that "the increase in expenditure is largely due to increase of population, and also to new endeavours on the part of the Government to supply the benefits and

appliances of civilisation, particularly as regards education and medical advice, or to enhance the value of property by means of public works, and that this has been provided for more by the increase in the yield of existing than in the imposition of new taxes." [1] This view of the situation is corroborated by the urgent appeal made by the Governor of Barbados to his Legislature in 1877, that they should immediately provide proper accommodation for lunatics and lepers, establish a better system of poor relief and a reformatory for juvenile offenders, and improve the educational system. A more humanitarian feeling is being manifested, the gratification of which is necessarily expensive.

But how far would the conclusions of the Commissioners apply at the present time, in view of the further increase in expenditure during the last fifteen years? Let us confine ourselves to Mr. Salmon's model Colony, Barbados, to Jamaica with its hybrid constitution, and to Trinidad; and let us take 1898 rather than 1899, because Barbados, in the latter year, had a tariff based upon the anticipation of reciprocity with the United States, and the accounts of Tobago were merged for the first time with those of Trinidad.

[1] Report, 1884, part ii. par. 468.

By comparison, then, with 1874, the expenditure upon the Medical Department has risen, in Barbados, from £13,380 to £16,575; in Jamaica, from £35,959 to £56,145; and in Trinidad, from £19,651 to £65,578; and upon education, in Barbados, from £7,464 to £16,359; and in Jamaica from £19,903 to £66,890. In Trinidad the amount expended in 1898 was £41,622. Further, there were entirely new outlays, as upon the reformatory and chemical and agricultural science in Barbados, the botanic gardens and Agricultural Department in Trinidad, and the subsidies paid to a Submarine Cable Company throughout the islands.

It will be noticed that, under the above headings, the proportionate increase in expenditure has been much greater in Jamaica and Trinidad than in Barbados. In the first place, the number of inhabitants has multiplied more rapidly in the former Colonies; in the second, educational and medical advantages can be afforded much more cheaply where there is a dense population. In such a case, also, the problems of government are simpler, which may be an explanation of the comparatively harmonious relations which have usually subsisted between the Executive and the Legislature in Barbados.

For there can be no difference of opinion, as in the Colonies containing unalienated Crown Lands, as to the principles upon which it is desirable to open up these for settlement. Expenditure upon roads and bridges, if judiciously supervised, may be recouped indirectly in very few years. But in the old plantocratic assemblies such a policy was naturally distasteful. Road-making was not only expensive but, by facilitating the negro's access to the land, might cause him to remove his labour from the estates. In Jamaica, indeed, roads have since been constructed more rapidly than was warranted by the resources of the country, but it is most admirably provided in that respect. And much of the work has been carried out from current revenue. Between the years 1891 and 1898 more than £500,000 was thus expended upon main roads and buildings. That this is not an isolated phenomenon is shown by the fact that, in Trinidad, £65,000 was devoted in 1899 out of accumulated funds to new roads, bridges, and other public works.

But has this greater activity been accompanied by heavier burdens upon the taxpayer? The provisions of the tariff will afford the best indication. It is customary in the West Indies to have a free list and a schedule of articles

charged with specific duties and to impose an *ad valorem* rate upon all goods not otherwise enumerated. I can show the alterations in a short summary in which I have enumerated foodstuffs because the duty upon them has been the subject of much adverse criticism.

| | Barbados. | | Jamaica. | | Trinidad. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1874. | 1898. | 1874. | 1898. | 1874. | 1898. |
| *Ad valorem* duty | 3 % | 10 % | 12½ % | 12½ % | 3½ % | 5 % |
| Bread .. .. | 5d. per 100 lbs. | 1s. per 100 lbs. | 6s. per 100 lbs. | ½d. per lb. | *ad valorem* | 1s. per barrel. |
| Flour .. .. | 3s. 6d. per barrel. | 4s. 2d. per barrel. | 8s. per barrel. | 8s per barrel. | 3s. per barrel. | 3s. 4d. per barrel. |
| Fish, dried, salted or smoked .. | 2d. per 112 lbs. | 1s. 6d. per 112 lbs. | 3s. 6d. per 100 lbs. | 3s. 6d. per 100 lbs. | 1s. per 100 lbs. | Free. |
| Salt Meat .. | 4s. 2d. per 100 lbs. | 4s. 2d. per 100 lbs. | 15s. per 200 lbs. | 15s. per 200 lbs. | 4s. 2d. per 100 lbs. | Free. |
| Rice .. .. | 5d. per 100 lbs. | 1s. per 100 lbs. | 3s. per 100 lbs. | 3s. per 100 lbs. | 2s. per 100 lbs. | 2s. 2d. per 100 lbs. |

From the above figures we gather that Jamaica has maintained uniformly high rates and that they have fluctuated in Barbados and Trinidad, with an upward tendency in the former Colony. And it is very noteworthy that in Trinidad, the only one among the three which can strictly be called a Crown Colony, the *ad valorem* duty, which falls upon such articles as hardware and cutlery, wearing apparel, boots and shoes, etc., is the

lowest. In Jamaica, indeed, wearing apparel, on the one hand, and hardware and cutlery on the other, had been taken out of the ordinary *ad valorem* classification and subjected to a duty of 25 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively. But these special duties were cancelled in 1899 when the general rate was raised to $16\frac{2}{3}$ per cent.

Before passing on to the direct taxes, I may say that a good deal of exaggerated language has been used about these import duties. Dr. Nicholls, medical officer and planter, who has been twenty-five years in Dominica, says that the natives could do entirely without flour. Where their diet is unsatisfactory is that it contains too much vegetable and not enough animal food. As regards Jamaica, where imported food is principally consumed by the negro when the local crops have failed, the Royal Commissioners of 1884 pointed out that the substitution of a land tax for some of the import duties would be equivalent to shifting taxation from flour to native-grown yams, plantains, and other ground provisions. They advocated, however, a considerable reduction in the scale; but their recommendation in this respect, as in most others, has remained without result. Mr. Watts, analytical and agricultural chemist to the

Leeward Islands, attributes such attractiveness as the imported goods have for the negro to their being always obtainable at almost uniform rates. There is not a regular supply of home-grown foods. Unfortunately they are most abundant at a time when work is plentiful and wages are at their highest. When they become scarce and labourers are desirous of finding employment, there is little work to be done. A serious attempt should be made, under the fostering help of the Imperial Department of Agriculture, to teach the negroes how to convert their local supplies into more permanent forms. Sweet potatoes and yams, for instance, may readily be converted into meal, in which condition they would keep indefinitely and form a useful means of equalising the supply of food and tending to keep prices at a more uniform level.[1]

I will only refer very briefly to the direct taxes. In Barbados they are practically the same now as they were twenty-five years ago in their application to the poorer classes. In Trinidad there was apparently no direct taxation in 1874; now there is a tax of 1s. on every acre of land and of 4s. on every house below the annual value

[1] "West Indian Bulletin," vol. i., No. 3, pp. 274-5.

of £5. Above that value the tax is at the rate of 7½ per cent. In Jamaica the property tax has been practically unaltered for many years; the house tax has been beneficially amended. Formerly floored houses paid twice as much as those which were unfloored, whereby the negro was deterred from improving his home. Indeed, the policy of a house tax has been strenuously challenged; married children will be retained in the paternal establishment, thereby causing overcrowding, in order that the tax on a second house may be avoided. In Jamaica there is also now a school tax and a tax upon holdings, imposed since 1890, which is partially graduated but, unless it has been amended this year, lets off the large landowner very easily.

The reader would not thank me if I troubled him with stamp duties, parochial expenditure, and traders' licences; but enough has been written to show that whereas the Government constantly increases its activity, it can no longer be said that the burdens, whether direct or indirect, are not appreciably greater. Of the Colonies which we have considered, the most favourably situated is Trinidad; the least, Jamaica, where, as we have seen, the *ad valorem* duty

was raised in 1899 from 12½ to 16⅔ per cent.

Why is this so? The answer is supplied in Sir David Barbour's Report, written in 1899, upon the Finances of Jamaica. After pointing out that the financial difficulties are largely the outcome of economic conditions which prevail throughout the West Indies wherever sugar is one of the staple crops, he goes on to say that the habit of borrowing for the purpose of public works which are not directly reproductive has had the effect of removing a natural check upon the growth of expenditure by largely transferring the burden of cost from the present to the future. Sir David does not attempt here to locate the responsibility, but he makes the Elective Members directly responsible for the ill-advised railway contract of 1889 which caused to the Colony an immediate loss of £26,000 a year and will, it is estimated, impose an additional annual burden of £35,000.

Certain persons of little experience in railway matters, says Sir David, were dazzled by the prospect of railway extension and, though an unfavourable opinion upon its prospects had been given by two gentlemen who had thoroughly investigated them, the Elective

Members pressed the scheme upon the Governor. As the negotiations proceeded, the contractor asked that the Government should practically give a guarantee upon the whole amount of the capital to be spent on the extensions; and Sir David understands that this important change was approved by the Members of the Legislature who were deputed to England to confer with the Colonial Office, and that it was, in point of fact, pressed by them on the Colonial Office. However that may be, the change was brought to the notice of the Government of Jamaica, and the additional responsibility was accepted by the Elected Members. It thus became a matter of comparatively little importance to the bondholders, who had found the capital, whether the railway could be worked at a profit or not. This matter is, of course, not the sole cause of the financial difficulties of Jamaica; it is quoted as evidence against the already mentioned theory that wider self-government would have prevented the crisis.

Much the same idea was expressed to me in Antigua. Some ten years ago, under the governorship of Sir W. F. Haynes Smith, who seems to have advocated undertakings out of proportion to the resources of the Colony, a

large amount of borrowed money was spent in deepening the harbour of St. John's, a work the failure of which was admitted when the dredger was subsequently sold. At the time that the matter was under consideration, the Legislative Council contained a majority of Elective Members, who were thus masters of the situation; but when the vote upon the Harbour Loan Bill was taken, as many of them were for it as against it, and it was carried by the votes of the unofficial and nominated members. This instance is obviously not so conclusive against self-government as the Jamaican case; and my local informants told me that some of the Electives allowed themselves to be influenced by the Governor's strong advocacy of the Harbour works.

Where, then, shall we seek a safeguard against unwise expenditure if it is admitted that it will not be found in the extension of self-government? In stricter control, says Sir David Barbour, by the Home Authorities. His remarks, as we know, have reference to the state of affairs in Jamaica, but since they are largely applicable to any Colonies in which there is a divided responsibility, whether there be a wholly elective branch of the Legislature or not, they illustrate the evils inherent in the system.

"The form of the Constitution was evidently settled with great care, but there appear to be certain defects in it, which are, to some extent at least, inseparable from any attempt to combine in a working compromise the conflicting systems of Crown Government and Representative Government.

"At the time when the present Constitution was settled, the Colonial Office expressly declared that in future the amount of the control in financial matters which it had previously exercised would be reduced.

"The system of approval and sanction of the Estimates by the Secretary of State for the Colonies hitherto in force was deliberately discontinued, though it was directed 'that they should still be transmitted to the Colonial Office for his inspection, and in order that he might have an opportunity of observing upon any matters involving questions of general financial policy in regard to which Her Majesty's Government would continue to be responsible.'

"Experience seems to me to disclose the following defects in the system then established. In the first place, Her Majesty's Government, by deciding no longer to approve and sanction the Estimates, relieved itself, to a large extent,

of responsibility for the ordinary administration of the finances.

"By this withdrawal of control a very full degree of responsibility was intended to be thrown on the Governor and the Legislative Council. But the responsibility of the Legislative Council could never be enforced in any practical manner, because, for whatever policy the Elected Members might vote, the burden could not be placed on them of putting that policy into practice and enforcing it. They could refuse to sanction expenditure, could delay business in the Council, and throw the administration into confusion, but in no way could real practical responsibility for their action be placed on them.

"The only real responsibility for the finances rested on the Governor, but he could not enforce his policy except by filling up the Council with nominated members, and declaring that the measures which he wished to carry were of paramount importance to the public interest.

"It was no doubt said that it was his duty to do so, if the public interest absolutely required it; but such action on his part would be a very unpopular measure, would bring him into direct conflict with the Elected Members, would expose

him to popular clamour, and it is not surprising that it was not exercised.

"On the other hand, if the Governor could secure the sanction of the Elected Members to measures involving increased expenditure he largely reduced his personal responsibility by a nominal transfer of it to a body on which no real responsibility could be enforced."

After pointing out that the Home Government is, in the last resort, responsible for the financial condition of Jamaica, Sir David proposes that, as no real responsibility can be enforced on the Elected Members, the number of nominated members should, as has since been done, be kept at its full strength ; and that, as the power of the Governor will be greater, his increase of authority should be balanced by subjecting him to stricter control by the Home Government. We should obtain thereby a substitution for the nominal responsibility of the Elected Members, of the real responsibility of the Governor and the Colonial Office.

If this recommendation be the right one, as I believe it to be, we arrive at the strange conclusion that, whereas the temperate Colonies advanced by leaps and bounds when they were free from the tutelage of Downing Street, the

situation in the tropical Colonies is so entirely different that it demands an increase, rather than a decrease, in the supervision at present exercised by the dominant country.

The example of Jamaica in cutting down its expenditure will doubtless be followed elsewhere as occasion arises. But, apart from the difficulties caused by the vested rights of office-holders, no comprehensive scheme of reduction is possible as long as almost each island is separately governed. The only real exception is found in the recent complete amalgamation of Tobago with Trinidad. Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia are united under a Governor-in-Chief of the Windward Islands, residing at Grenada, with subordinate Administrators in the two other islands. There is one Auditor-General and one asylum for the group. A Superintendent of Public Works divides his time between Grenada and St. Vincent, and there is a Court of Appeal for the three islands and Barbados. But, for all practical purposes, each of the Windward Islands is a distinct administrative unit. Then there is the Colony of the Leeward Islands consisting of the five Presidencies of Antigua, St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, Montserrat, and the Virgin Islands. They are governed under a federal system

established in 1871, which has unfortunately caused all further proposals for federation to be viewed with disfavour. Though the islands are close to each other (I was able to see both St. Kitts and Montserrat from Antigua), and their total population is not more than 140,000, each of them retains its own Legislative Council in addition to its representation on the Federal Council; and the fundamental mistake was made of giving to the Federal Council concurrent instead of exclusive powers of legislation. The result has been to complicate matters where simplification was urgently required. Scarcely any two of the tariffs are alike: the direct taxes differ in each island, and so do the harbour dues and the tonnage duties. So little centralisation is there, stopping short even of the defence forces, that the five local Councils usually pass more important Ordinances than the Federal Council. There is no reason whatever, apart from inter-colonial jealousies, why one Council should not amply suffice for the Leeward Islands, especially if Dominica were attached to the Windward Islands, with which it has a greater physical resemblance. The present hybrid arrangement is disliked, and the Presidencies have drifted further apart since it was decided, from motives

of economy, to drop the small steamer which plied regularly between the islands. How much this step is to be regretted will be gathered from the assertion of the last Royal Commission that it is of great importance that there should be cheap, regular, and frequent means of communication between the West Indian Islands. It would tend to assist, if not to create, trade in local products, to remove the condition of isolation which exists at present, and to enable labourers to move freely to the best markets for labour, a facility which is of special importance at a time when the sugar industry is in so precarious a condition.

Upon the wider question, that of federation or unification, the Commissioners confined themselves to the suggestion that when improved steam communication had been established for some years, it might be found possible to bring the whole of the Leeward, Windward Islands, and Barbados under one Government. They would have nothing to say to a federation of all the West Indian Colonies, being doubtful whether it would conduce to economy; and Jamaica certainly, and Trinidad and British Guiana to an almost equal extent, would, in their opinion, continue to demand the constant presence and

attention of an Administrator of Governor's rank. The whole subject is dismissed in very few words, whereas an earlier Royal Commission, that of 1884, had strongly advocated unification in the Windward and in the Leeward Islands. Barbados would be brought with difficulty into any scheme, as it alone of the Eastern islands has representative institutions, and its inhabitants showed somewhat violently, under the governorship of Sir John Pope Hennessy, that they would resist any modification in their ancient Constitution. The only hope would be that they would change their minds if they saw that great savings were being effected in the more pliable Colonies.

The only general proposal that I have seen is that of Mr. Salmon; but it is thoroughly unpractical, being based upon the widest self-government. He would have a bi-cameral general assembly in which Jamaica would have fifty-three representatives. In addition, Jamaica should have a local assembly of about sixty members. Whence all these men are to be obtained, he does not deign to explain, and we may dismiss his suggestions as chimerical when Jamaica finds it difficult to get fourteen suitable men for the Elective side of the Legislative

Council. There is more sense in the idea, based upon the anticipation of a large saving by federation, that a Colonial fleet of steamers should supply all the requirements which railways meet elsewhere.

We are, therefore, thrown back upon the Royal Commission of 1884, which may first be considered as regards the Leeward Islands, which present the strongest case for unification. If, as the Commissioners propose, Dominica be excluded, we shall be dealing with an area little more than twice as large as that of the Isle of Wight, which has five distinct Legislative bodies and five distinct sets of Ordinances. And the Imperial authorities have every right to adopt such measures as they think best for a group which imposes an annual charge upon the Imperial Exchequer. Possibly this may be due in part to our selfish policy in regard to the Continental sugar bounties, but we must deal with the facts as we find them, and, even from the sentimental point of view, a Colony which has already given up its elective institutions cannot lose much by merging its identity with its immediate neighbours. In the opposite scale are many solid benefits.

"The union of the various islands under one

Administration, in place of the present imperfect Federation, will give them a Government that will be really efficient and actually cost less. A simpler and uniform mode of raising the necessary revenue will press less on industries, commerce, and general freedom of action; and as a united body the islands will be able to do more for one another and for the common good.

"A single Legislature will prove far more economical of time and labour than the present series of seven (now six). Its first task should be a complete consolidation of the laws, in the course of which such reforms as may be deemed advisable can be readily discussed and made statutory; such a consolidation will be of the utmost value, not only to those who have to administer justice, but also to all residents in the Colony.

"The united Colony will also be far better able to deal with such common questions as labour supply, steamer service, telegraphic communication, public works necessitating capital outlay, and, most important of all, the securing an efficient and well-paid Civil Service." [1]

[1] "West Indies. Report of the Royal Commission, 1884," part iii. page 78.

The case for unification in the Windward Islands is scarcely less strong, but except as regards St. Vincent and Dominica, if the latter is to go into the Windward group, the Imperial authorities cannot maintain that the financial assistance which they have rendered gives them an additional right to prescribe the form of government. But, granting that the true basis of successful union is identity of requirements, each of the islands of Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent possesses, in addition to small tracts of cultivated soil, large areas of accessible and fertile, but as yet uncultivated, land. In each roads are urgently required to open up the country, and there is ample room for future growth. Grenada, it is true, is in a more advanced position, but it is too small for a separate administrative existence.

Each of these islands has, of course, its separate tariff, its separate Departments, its separate series of Ordinances. All these the Royal Commissioners wished to sweep away by the substitution of a single system complete in itself. They pointed out that, in undeveloped Colonies, the most important spending Department is that connected with Public Works, and that there is a grave risk of waste and extravagance unless

it is under the control of a properly qualified head and an efficient staff. But a small island cannot afford to pay such a salary as will attract men qualified to initiate and carry through new undertakings. One Director of Public Works should be able to do this for the whole of the proposed new group, as Grenada and Dominica are not more than two hundred miles apart. The imposition of uniform taxes would admittedly be a more difficult matter than in the Leeward Islands. As Dominica's nearest neighbour on each side is French, the increase of import or excise duties above a certain rate inevitably acts as an incitement to smuggling: on the other hand, direct taxes are paid most unwillingly; but, as the country is more opened up, their collection must become easier. And it is helpful to state the object upon which the money will be expended, as with the education tax in Jamaica. The negroes will then no longer believe, as I was told many of them still do in St. Lucia, that the proceeds go into the Sovereign's privy purse. In any case, the proper adjustment of direct and indirect taxation should not be beyond the powers of the highly-paid officials of the combined Colony.

Those who wish for further information as

to the suggested schemes of unification will find it in great detail in the Report of the Royal Commission which was published in 1884. Most of the facts and deductions are still applicable.

In the following year the proposals were laid before the several Councils in the Windward Islands, but none of them would have anything to say to them. The principal objection was to the common Treasury, each island being afraid that it would pay more than it would receive. I fear that there is even now no spontaneous desire for union. The negro would no doubt gladly acquiesce in whatever his rulers thought best for him, but there would certainly be opposition among the traders and merchants. The wishes, however, of a small section of the community should not be regarded as a conclusive obstacle to a scheme which would conduce to economy, to greater efficiency in administration, and to the expansion of trade. The last result seems to me as inevitable as either of the first two. With uniformity in import, tonnage, and harbour duties commerce is bound to be placed upon a broader and more profitable basis.

Personally, speaking with the irresponsibility of an independent inquirer, I should like to go yet further. I can see no valid obstacle to, and

much to be recommended in, a combined Colony which would include Trinidad and Tobago as well as all the Windward and Leeward Islands. It is unfortunate that Trinidad, which would necessarily be the seat of the Administration, is at the extreme end of the chain. But it is thought that the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company are likely, in view of the competition which they encounter from Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co. in Jamaica, to substitute Trinidad for Jamaica as the next place of call for their oceanic steamers after Barbados. In that event the mails for the Windward and Leeward Islands would presumably be transhipped at Trinidad, and a faster fortnightly communication would be established between the Colonies. It is obvious how much the status of the smaller Colonies would be raised by their consolidation. They would be able to negotiate a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States with a greater chance of its success, and their views, as upon the Sugar Bounties, would have more influence with the Home Government. A Reciprocity Treaty between the United States and Barbados or the Leeward Islands is somewhat of an absurdity. Of course a still greater weight would attach to a Colony including also

Jamaica, Barbados, and British Guiana; and Trinidad would then hold a central position. But it is contended that Jamaica is too distant and too important for a subordinate *rôle*, and that British Guiana should develop independently owing to its vast possibilities of internal expansion. However that may be, Trinidad is eminently suited to be the head of a great organisation; and its rulers, owing to the diversified pursuits of the inhabitants, should know how to deal with places long established in sugar as well as with those which are gradually evolving new forms of cultivation. And Trinidad will have a further qualification for the leadership if, as I anticipate, it becomes in time an immense *entrepôt* for the transhipment of the produce raised along the fertile banks of the Orinoco both in Colombia and in Venezuela. These unfortunate but richly-endowed Republics cannot continue for ever to be in a state of chronic revolution. A wilder flight of imagination shows me Trinidad as the last port of call before Europe for steamers which have come through the Nicaragua or Panama Canal and picked up cargo upon the Colombian and Venezuelan coasts.

Possibly it may be thought that I have not

taken sufficient note of practical difficulties in advocating the substitution of one Legislative Council and one Executive Council for the ten now in existence. But I cannot see how, in these days of concentration and keen competition, these Colonies can afford to maintain a separate existence. Let us aim rather, at least for Trinidad and the Leeward and Windward Islands, at one Governor, one Colonial Secretary, one Auditor-General, one Treasurer, one Director of Public Works, one Supreme Court periodically going upon circuit to all the islands. Rightly considered, the intervening belts of sea assist rather than hinder inter-communication; and St. Kitts and Antigua cannot be more than some four hundred miles from Trinidad. How much easier would it be for the Governor to reach any point of his dominions where his presence was required than for the Governor of most of our West African possessions! The fact is that, in the days of great prosperity all the establishments were started on far too grandiose a scale, that the Englishman has failed to realise how insignificant are many of the islands which are endeared to him by the memory of heroic deeds, and that the whole point of view must be altered in the light of existing conditions.

The islands require to be governed by the best talent available in England, which can only be attracted by an adequate salary. A first-class staff at headquarters, combined with one capable man in each of the subordinate islands, as now in Tobago, would not only govern more efficiently, but would guarantee such continuity and uniformity in taxation and administration as would tempt the British capitalist. There is no more constant complaint in the West Indies than that of the chronic lack of credit, with the consequent high rate of interest, even when the security is unimpeachable. But whatever else may be done, the investor is likely to look askance at the West Indies if he believes that the inferior race has any considerable measure of power. Herein is yet another reason why I advocate so strongly direct government by the Crown.

But what of parochial affairs? The Boards, it is the general opinion, should be wholly or in part elective. Not that the admission of the elective principle can be expected always to work well. A recent examination into the affairs of the Parochial Boards in Jamaica disclosed bad as well as good results. But provided that, as in Jamaica, the Government supervises the details of expenditure and, in the last resort,

retains the power of suspending an inefficient Board, I should be sorry to see the negroes shut out from that participation in local affairs which may help to qualify them, at some distant date, to receive wider electoral privileges.

In this chapter I have sought to prove two distinct propositions: that great benefits would accrue from the union of as many of the West Indian Colonies as possible under one Government; and that, in the interest of all sections of the community, direct government by the Crown, under the close supervision of the Home Authorities, is preferable throughout the West Indies to any system of representative institutions.

Of course it would be simpler to allow these Colonies to manage their affairs in their own way; but I cannot see that such a policy would be consonant with an appreciation of our Imperial responsibility. But, if we decide not to evade our duty, it behoves us to exercise the greatest care in the selection of the agents to whom we temporarily entrust the destinies of our tropical Dependencies. The good intentions of the present class of administrators are unquestionable; my only doubt is whether some of them have sufficient strength of will and steadfastness.

## CHAPTER V

### TRAVEL IN THE WEST INDIES

THIS chapter will be very short. Those who think of a trip to the West Indies will be able to get most of the information that they require in the pamphlets issued by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co., who have the contract for the direct service between Bristol and Jamaica.

Nor do I propose to describe the scenery. Kingsley in "At Last," and Froude in "The English in the West Indies," have, fortunately for me and my readers, made it presumptuous on the part of any subsequent visitor to seek to emulate them. Kingsley, it will be remembered, devotes the greater part of his book to Trinidad, while Froude, who travelled more widely, speaks with most enthusiasm of Dominica and parts of

Jamaica. I am sorry that he did not see more of Grenada and St. Lucia, which are both very lovely. If St. Lucia is reached from the north in the mail steamer, there is time, while coal is being taken in, to climb up to the Morne and enjoy what we emphatically regard as the finest view in the West Indies. More time should be allowed in Grenada, which is a particularly charming island. In the neighbourhood of the principal town, St. George's, a series of delightful excursions can be made; and the hotel, which is unpretentious but comfortable, is superior to most of those in the smaller islands. As far as they are concerned, the traveller who would not be independent of them should assume that they are bad unless he has a recent assurance to the contrary. In Jamaica, British Guiana, Barbados, and Trinidad, the accommodation is, of course, of a better character.

I understand that Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co. have taken over the management of the leading hotel in Kingston and of the Constant Springs Hotel, which is ten miles away but connected with the town by electric trams. They are making a great effort to attract tourists to Jamaica, and should be successful, as at least a month can be spent most enjoyably in the island.

Jamaica has a great advantage over all the other Colonies in possessing in several towns hotels which will satisfy Europeans or Americans. Elsewhere, it is difficult to get about much in the absence of private hospitality which, however, is proffered most generously.

The shortcomings in the respect of hotels certainly make the sixty-five days' tour for £65, under the auspices of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, more attractive than it would be otherwise as, except during his stay in Jamaica and Venezuela, the tourist can always sleep and feed upon a steamer of the Company. But I should not advise any persons to tie themselves down to this itinerary at the start unless they are taking the sea voyage simply for the sake of their health. After being taken across the Atlantic to Barbados, they will go successively to St. Thomas, La Guayra (the Port for Caracas), and Jamaica, returning between each of these trips to, and spending Saturday to Monday in, Barbados, which is not one of the most beautiful islands. Now, quite apart from the fact that distance will be saved by going out or returning by Messrs. Elder, Dempster and Co's. line, which was not running when we were in the West Indies, a glance at the map will show how roundabout is

the route. For instance, after touching upon the return journey from St. Thomas at St. Lucia, four days are wasted in reaching St. Vincent, which is almost within sight. And I do not think a proper idea is formed of the English islands. It is true that most of them are touched at, but how much can be seen in a stay of a few hours? Of course travellers need not spend the four days in the Danish island of St. Thomas or the two in Venezuela, but can await the steamer in Dominica, Trinidad, or some other island; but not many of them care to sacrifice the free board and lodging to which they are entitled. Further, British Guiana is omitted altogether unless a separate ticket is taken for the journey from Barbados and back. And, even so, there is unnecessary travel and expenditure. Supposing one wishes to visit both British Guiana and Trinidad, it will take him six days by the Royal Mail Line between the two points *viâ* Barbados, while there is frequent direct communication in about forty hours by Canadian, French (Compagnie Générale Transatlantique), and Dutch steamers. Again, we had left the Northern islands to the end and got from La Guayra to Martinique, in one of the large French Mail steamers, in less than two days as compared with

the eight occupied by the exigencies of the British Mail Service. There is yet another possible economy of time, which we did not realise until too late: a monthly steamer of the Hamburg-American Line goes from St. Thomas to Jamaica in three days, whereas the passenger by the Royal Mail steamers would take ten to reach his destination. From La Guayra to Puerto Rico, whence it is easy to reach Cuba, there is the American Red D. Line (agent, D. Maccabe, Liverpool), which is well spoken of, and may be useful to those who want to see what the Americans are doing in the West Indies and to return home by the United States. From the British Colonies, Cuba is practically inaccessible; probably owing to the quarantine constantly imposed against the island in view of the prevalence of yellow fever, the Shipping Companies have preferred to give it a wide berth.

The steamers to which I have referred hitherto all run according to scheduled dates. There are others, primarily devoted to cargo, which contain good accommodation for a small number of passengers. We travelled comfortably by the Quebec and Leyland Lines. Both were then British, but the latter has since been bought up by the Americans. Steamers such as these enable

one to curtail a stay which would be too long or to get a few extra days. If you trust to the Royal Mail alone, and want to visit Dominica on your way North from Barbados, you must either stay a few hours or a fortnight. By means of these cargo boats or Messrs. Pickford and Black's subsidised Canadian line, whose headquarters are at Halifax, Nova Scotia, you will be able to make a stay of an intermediate length.

When I thought of a trip to the West Indies and made inquiries in London, the Royal Mail was thrust down my throat; and when I saw how constantly I should apparently be obliged to retrace my footsteps, I should have given up the idea altogether if I had not been very anxious to see a group of tropical Colonies. It is largely a matter of temperament. Some persons like to have the whole journey mapped out for them and do not trouble about much else; but those who enjoy working out combinations may be encouraged to visit the West Indies by a knowledge of the short cuts which save expense and economise the time spent in actual travel.

Opinions differ as to the best time in which to arrive in the West Indies. The end of November is often suggested, but we found the heat very trying until the close of the year. We were told,

indeed, that it was most exceptional, but I think seasoned travellers will agree with me that they seem often to knock up against irregular climatic conditions. If I were going out again I should not get there until January, when the islands are receiving the full force of the North-East trade wind which reduces the temperature. They are so near to the Equator that, but for the alternation of the wet and dry seasons, which varies in different Colonies, and the beneficial effects of the trade wind, one month of the year is very much like another.

I have heard it said that the climate of the West Indies in winter is similar to that of the Riviera. This is nonsense, except as regards the highlands of Jamaica. The heat is much greater in the West Indies, but there is not that sudden fall of the temperature before sunset which visitors to the Riviera soon learn to dread. On the contrary, there is usually at that time a lull in the cool wind, which gets up again later. Hence the nights are never oppressively hot—at least during the visitors' months. I had not intended to have any figures in this chapter, but I must just say that at Kingston, which is one of the hottest spots in Jamaica, the mean temperature varies from 74·6° in January to

81·1° in July, and that there is a fall of about 1° for every 300 feet of elevation.

Specific hints which might not readily occur to travellers may be summed up in three recommendations: take much more linen than you would expect to require; leave your dressing-bag behind, as the negro porters would smash all the glass fittings; and (my wife tells me this) ladies should take no *glacé* silk in their wardrobes, as the effect of the climate is to make it crack like paper and go to pieces even when it is not worn.

It is difficult to give an idea of an average scale of expenses. Most of the hotels, if not all, are conducted upon the American plan, which makes you pay for your meals whether you have them or not. The inclusive charges vary from $2 a day to $3½. By the by, the currency is rather a nuisance. There is very little gold, and, except in Jamaica, where they are in sterling, the bank notes are in denominations of $5, equal to £1 0s. 10d., and upwards. So it becomes a complicated matter to pay a bill presented in dollars with notes of this character and English silver. The practical inconvenience, however, is not very great, and I have only mentioned the system because it is something of a curiosity.

One is also less inclined to grumble because the Colonial Bank, which issues the notes, will be cashing one's letter of credit, and its local managers, one and all, are models of courtesy and obligingness.

The fares for the intercolonial journeys are high, but are, I believe, the same whatever line you may take. The handbook published by the Royal Mail Company gives full information. From British Guiana to Trinidad you pay $15; from La Guayra direct to Martinique, 150 francs. I give these rates because they would have to be looked up elsewhere.

The most uncertain item of expense is that for the hire of horses and carriages. These charges are distinctly heavy, and are constantly incurred, as outside of Jamaica (where the less said about the railway the better), Trinidad, and, to a more limited extent, British Guiana and Barbados, you must ride or drive if you want to see anything of the country. Some of the finest excursions in Jamaica and Dominica can only be made on horseback; but those who have not ridden before need not be afraid of the steady animals which will carry them at a walking pace up the mountains. In British Guiana, however, a pleasant trip can be made from Georgetown

up the Essequibo river to its junction with the Mazaruni.

This Colony is often omitted by tourists, probably because most of them travel by Royal Mail Steamers, and would have to make a separate trip from Barbados and back. But if you want to get to Trinidad and will take one of the direct liners, you will be able to include British Guiana by an additional forty hours of sea. And it is a pity not to do so. Georgetown, the capital, is undoubtedly the finest city in the British West Indies. The sugar estates, which are intersected by canals, and their splendid factories, as well as the sea-wall originally constructed in the days of the Dutch, are most interesting; and after the small West Indian islands, it is an agreeable change to realise, from the majestic if turbid sweep of the rivers, that you are on the fringe of a vast continent.

Where so many of the English islands are lovely, it would be invidious to advise the traveller as to those which he shall select for a stay. But I am compelled to warn him against more than a hurried visit to the French Antilles. We did not stop in Guadeloupe, but were told that the accommodation was no better than at St. Pierre, in Martinique, where, by the courtesy

of the Governor, we lodged in an unoccupied official residence, but had to go out for our meals to the hotel. And I have never come across food which was quite so unpalatable. It was apparently cooked with some kind of bad lard, which made all the dishes taste exactly alike and equally nasty. This drawback is regrettable, as Martinique is very picturesque; and whereas the negresses tend to bright colours in all the islands which were once French, they there run riot with their motley frocks and gaudy bandanna handkerchiefs round their heads.

We reached Martinique direct from La Guayra after having spent nearly a week at Caracas, and we should be sorry to have missed this portion of our trip, as a South American Republic has a great character of its own. The harbour works at La Guayra are owned by an English Company, and so is the railway, which goes in two hours to Caracas, which is 3,000 feet above the sea. We were a good deal harried in the examination of our luggage, and remembered that, though each English island has its separate custom house, we had not once had the least trouble. Probably we should have got through more easily if the country had not been, as it usually is, in a state of revolution. Some of our friends

in Trinidad tried to dissuade us from going to it; others pointed out that the disturbances were far away from Caracas, and that no fighting takes place there, as the inhabitants always accept the sway of the general who has got the upper hand. At the time of our visit, General (now President) Castro had been *de facto* ruler for eighteen months, and called himself the "Liberal Restaurador." He was postponing the convocation of Congress as long as possible since, though his agents would secure the return of representatives pledged to vote for him as President, he would cease to be entirely irresponsible.

We found everything perfectly quiet, and no ill-feeling was manifested towards us as English people. I doubt, indeed, whether the Venezuelans ever cared a pin about the boundary dispute with British Guiana. They were said to have been gratified by the military honours accorded to their Commissioners for the delimitation of the frontier upon their arrival at Georgetown, and to have a sneaking affection for the English on account of their co-operation, though it was purely individual, in the War of Independence against Spain.

But I have allowed myself to digress. I will only say that, though the public buildings are

tawdry and the churches inartistic, Caracas is a fascinating place. It is difficult to explain the precise attraction; but the whole thing seemed to us so much like a scene from a pantomime, especially the garishly painted fronts of many of the houses. Their general construction and the high barred windows suggest reminiscences of Spain, which are intensified in the churches, with their waxen groups and images dressed up in real silk or satin. And the same with the costumes; but a feeling of incongruity comes over one at the sight of negresses and Indian women wearing the mantilla.

Caracas has been called the "Paris of the South," but the term is now a misnomer, whatever it may have been in the past. Since the chronic civil strife has been conducted with "weapons of precision" most of the leading families are in mourning, which is not conducive to social gaiety, and the price of coffee, which is the staple product and affords a test of the average rate of prosperity, has been continuously on the downward grade. The visitor, however, will enjoy the good band which plays twice a week in the principal square, the Plaza Bolivar, and the musical sketches, the Spanish "Zarzuelas," which are given regularly at one of the theatres.

He will be the more appreciative as in the West Indies he will not have had similar opportunities. Lovely and interesting as they are, a complete change of scene interposed in the middle of the trip should not detract from its enjoyment. As others may be similarly constituted with ourselves, I have laid some stress upon the excursion to Venezuela, which distinctly enhanced the satisfaction with which we look back upon our journey to the Caribbean Sea.

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